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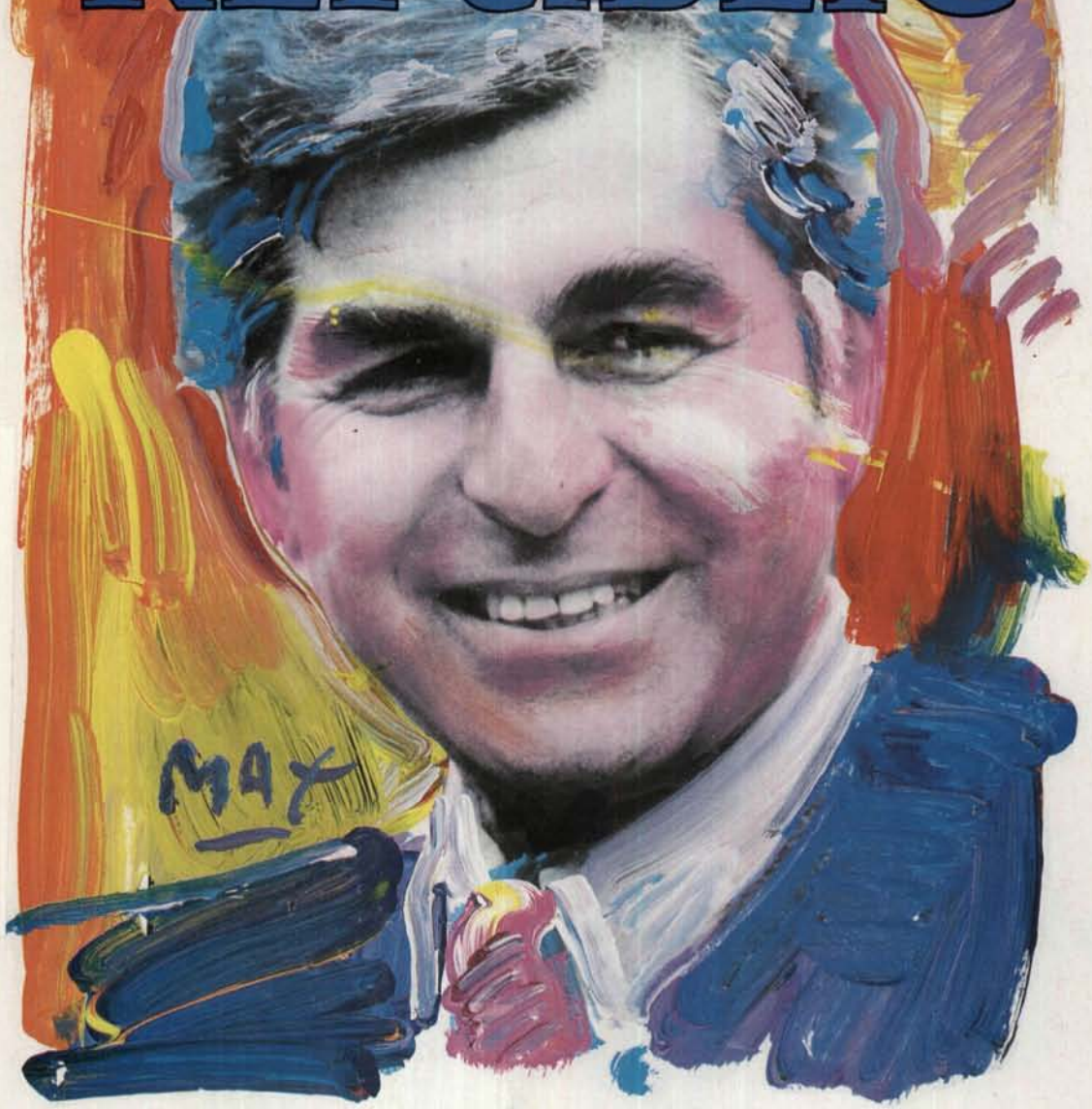

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CORRESPONDENCE

REVENGE OF THE NERDS

To the editors:

From TNR's cover, I expected Michael McGough's essay on "The Decline of Debate" to bemoan the sorry state of the presidential debates ("Pull It Across Your Flow," October 10). I was shocked to find him comparing that collection of sound bites favorably to high school debate—one of the few honest and truly intellectual extracurricular activities open to high school students today. While it is true that "debaters used to quote *World Marxist Review* as freely as *Foreign Affairs*," how many non-debating ninth grade students have ever read either? McGough's contempt for "the spread"—making many arguments in a limited time—is misplaced. It necessitates clarity both in speaking and in organizing one's thought processes. If an opponent "drops a D.A." (i.e., ignores your reasoned argument that his policy change will result in disaster), he deserves to have his advocacy rejected. Would that Bush and Dukakis were held to such a standard!

JOHN M. BREDEHOFT
Herndon, Virginia

To the editors:

Michael McGough fails to realize that debate is above all else a sport. Like any sport it follows its own rules and conventions. Just because it is a sport for the intellect with some value as an educator is no reason to argue that reality is paramount, or even very important. No one questions the realism of football or soccer in regards to everyday life. Perhaps some cultural bias is at work here besides debate snobbery.

DAN NEXON
Alexandria, Virginia

To the editors:

"Off-topic," rather than "on-topic," debate was practiced at Yale when I was a debater there in the '70s. This meant that instead of subscribing to the pompous national topic all year, we debated only ad hoc topics that were decided upon at most a few weeks in advance. Off-topic debating does not allow for exhaustive research and mountains of notecards, but instead fosters creativity and quick thinking. Many of our debates were decided by audience vote rather than by judges. Sure we met up with some on-topic teams at our off-topic tournaments. Even when they played by our rules they were geeks. Sounds like they still are.

STEPHANIE VARDAVAS
New York, New York

REAGAN'S BETRAYED TRUST

To the editors:

TNR attributes the massive 1983 Social Security tax increase to Ronald Reagan, in order to counter George Bush's "We didn't raise your taxes" refrain ("Taxing Facts," September 26). But recall the May 1981 flap when OMB proposed reducing the Social Security early retirement benefit from 80 percent to 55 percent of full Old Age and Survivors Disability Insurance (OASDI) benefits: the Senate voted 96-0 against it, despite everyone knowing that the Trust Fund would be bankrupt by mid-1982. Reagan was so badly burned by Democratic and media demagoguery that he proposed a Social Security Commission to solve the Trust Fund problem, i.e., to raise taxes. His acquiescence to its "bipartisan" solution was a political necessity. Argue if you will that he should have told the truth about OASDI—most recipients are richer than the workers supporting them, and receive far more than they paid in FICA taxes, etc.—but you cannot argue that Reagan was responsible for the tax increase.

JOHN C. WOHLSTETTER
Washington, D.C.

ROTTEN EGG

To the editors:

I am not an admirer of Dan Quayle and I do not plan to vote for him. But I thought that James Bovard's "Quayle's Egg" (September 12 & 19) amounted to a cheap shot. Do the abuses of Job Training Partnership Act result from the law that Dan Quayle wrote or how Indiana chooses to administer the law? Are these abuses repeated in other states? The article would have been far better if it had answered these questions. Then we might know where to place the blame.

PAUL T. HUNT JR.
Pasadena, California

ALL BURNED UP

To the editors:

Matt Ridley badly misrepresents National Park fire policy ("Scorched Earth," October 3), which is based on the blue-ribbon Leopold Committee report adopted by Interior Secretary Stewart Udall in 1963. The committee called for the restoration of parks such as Yellowstone to the natural conditions existing when European settlers first saw the landscape, and stated that both naturally occurring fire and prescribed fire should be used to accomplish this. The committee's prescription is hardly a purposeless "letting nature take its course" policy. And neither is the Park Service's recent two-year effort to sell restoration of the wolf to Yellowstone.

As for Ridley's assertion that "nobody knows what Yellowstone looked like when it was pristine," the approximate ecological conditions are easily determined from pollen grains in bog soil cores, tree ring studies showing the frequency of fire scars, archaeological digs of animal bones, etc., and from the journals of early explorers and photographs taken during the Civil War period. Incidentally, the poor "vanished" aspen will sprout in large numbers after the fires that so enrage TNR.

BEN W. TWIGHT
University Park, Pennsylvania

PREBALD FACTS

To the editors:

Your decision not to use fact checkers has allowed me to experience "the thrill of fact checkers' high" ("Are You Completely Bald?") not once but twice on reading the September 26 issue. At first I was dismayed to find my colleague, the eminent Proustian Jean Milly, referred to as George Milly by Richard Howard ("In Search of Lost Proust"), whose new translation of Proust will, I hope, be more accurate than his copying of the title page. However, my dismay turned to amusement when, in the article on fact checking, you said that it didn't matter whether the pie whose upper crust was to be pierced before baking was "blackberry or banana cream." Oh, but it does. Banana cream pies have no upper crust but are made by baking a single crust, cooling it, filling it with bananas and custard, and garnishing it with whipped cream. True, there would be disaster in the oven were you to attempt to bake it, but why cry over spilled cream?

ENID G. MARANTZ
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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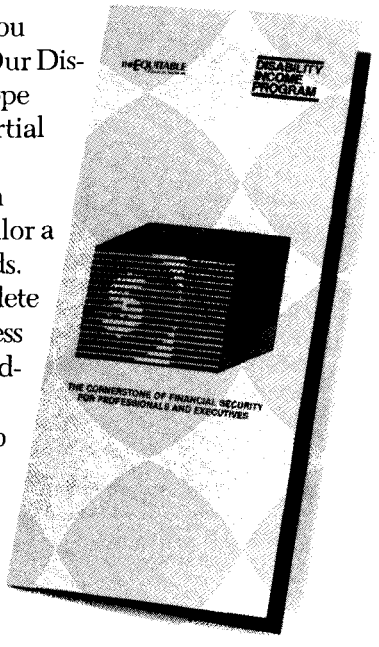

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ELECTRICITY—ACUTE NEED FOR NEW SUPPLY

Long after the searing summer heat has passed, 1988 will be remembered as the year many of America's utilities recorded electricity demand they hadn't expected until the 1990s. That may make 1988 the year that America awakens to the pressing need to build new electric generating capacity.

Hot weather is only part of the story. Even without the record summer heat, the U.S. is quickly approaching the time when electric utilities will not be able to meet normal growth in electricity demand. In some regions, they already can't.

Higher Than Forecast

Since 1982, when the U.S. economy emerged from recession, growth in electricity sales has been much higher than most experts had forecast. If this rate of growth persists—and, without a recession, it will—electricity demand will overtake reliable, cost-effective supply as early as 1990.

Electricity use is growing faster than expected because the U.S. economy is becoming more electricity-intensive, continuing a long-term trend. America's use of nonelectric forms of energy has declined about 10 percent since the 1973 Arab oil embargo, but electricity use has increased about 50 percent, with almost all the increase provided by coal and nuclear energy. Electric power has been the engine driving our economic growth. The 50 percent increase in electric use since 1973 has given us about a 45 percent increase in GNP. Electrification also increases our energy efficiency, reducing the amount of energy required per unit of GNP.

The Oil Problem

New baseload electric power plants can also help avert another looming crisis—this nation's growing addiction to imported oil. This dependence is a direct threat to our national security and worsens our trade deficit.

The problem with oil is that most of the world's supply belongs to other countries. The U.S. has less than 5 percent of the world's oil reserves and our production is declining, yet we use more than 25 percent of the world's production and our consumption is rising. America's oil imports are rising, rapidly approaching 50 percent of all the oil we use. Last year, the U.S. paid about $40 billion for imported oil, one-fourth of our record trade deficit.

The solution to our growing foreign oil dependence is the same today as it was after the 1973–74 oil embargo—to use energy more efficiently and to turn to more electricity generated from fuels like nuclear energy and coal that America has in abundance.

The Benefits of Nuclear Energy

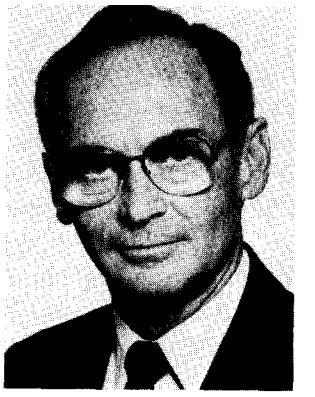
Nuclear energy is now America's second largest source of electricity, after coal. We have 109 nuclear electric plants licensed to operate in 33 states. Since 1973, our nuclear electric plants have helped us cut the use of foreign oil by 3½ billion barrels and reduced our payments to foreign oil producers by $105 billion. And these plants have operated only for about one-quarter of their useful lives, so their benefits—already large—will continue to grow.

Nuclear energy also has environmental benefits and does not contribute to the "greenhouse effect." Since 1973, the 412 nuclear electric plants around the world have cut the world's coal use by over 2.5 billion tons and its oil use by about 16 billion barrels, with resulting reductions in "greenhouse" gases.

Despite our growing need, regulatory, political and financial uncertainties prevent electric utilities from planning the new baseload power plants—coal or nuclear—that are required. Our economic growth and national security depend on removing those obstacles.

Otherwise, electric utilities will be forced to turn back to oil-fired plants that were relegated to limited service by the coal and nuclear electric plants built over the last 15 years. This means more expensive electricity and even greater dependence on imported oil from the unstable Middle East.

Nuclear electric power plants, by themselves, cannot solve the tensions in the Persian Gulf or our other oil-related problems. But they helped America and the rest of the world overcome the energy crises of the 1970s. They are fueling our economic growth. And they can help cushion us against economic and military shocks in the 1990s and beyond.



Harold B. Finger
President and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Council For Energy Awareness

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 7, 1988

DUKAKIS FOR PRESIDENT

In the 44 years since his moment of bravery over the Pacific in World War II, George Bush's only notable accomplishment has been the brilliantly demagogic political campaign he has waged the past three months. That this mediocre man and his sub-mediocre running mate stand poised to become president and vice president of the United States is a sad comment on America's decadent political culture (and we include both parties in that indictment).

No particular qualification is essential for the job of president, and none truly suffices. A governor or former governor can claim actual experience running a government; a senator can claim deep involvement with national and international issues. A sharp intelligence is useful; on the other hand, as Ronald Reagan has demonstrated, firm ideological conviction can be an adequate substitute. Honesty and integrity are a plus; but an ability to lead and inspire is also important, even though this talent rarely comes without a modicum of snake oil.

Every path to the presidency is fortuitous, and yet George Bush's may be unique in not involving much of *any* of the qualities of experience, intelligence, ideological commitment, integrity, or inspirational ability one might hope to find in a president. He served two terms in Congress two decades ago. In the 1970s he served barely a year each in four prestigious appointed positions, which he left without any record of significant achievement or a single memorable word. He was Ronald Reagan's second choice for vice president at the 1980 Republican convention. Reagan picked Bush for the same reasons of ideological balance for which Bush now ridicules Michael Dukakis's choice of Lloyd Bentsen, plus Bush's special capacity for doglike loyalty. As an ironic result, Bush stands today as the heir to Reaganism.

Nothing in Bush's eight-year record as vice president gives evidence of presidential qualities. The Reagan presidency has not been without its successes, but the only association Bush can legitimately claim to them is one of propinquity. Regarding the administration's failures, Bush conveniently denies even that association (although, in the most notorious case, the evidence is overwhelming that Bush did know of the arms-for-hostages swap and did nothing about it). Bush claims to have had a special role in three areas: drugs, terrorism, and deregulation. In none can he point to any sparkling success. In each, the record is tainted by scandal.

The major pillar of the Bush candidacy is prosperity. He promises to continue the Reagan policies he once denounced as "voodoo economics." These ostensibly have produced growth, jobs, low inflation, low interest rates, lower taxes, smaller government, in total contrast to the state of affairs at the end of the last Democratic administration. Now for some facts:

- The most important economic triumph of the 1980s—the conquest of inflation—had virtually nothing to do with Reagan's policies. It was engineered by Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, an appointee of Democrat Jimmy Carter whom Reagan later dumped. The high interest rates Bush deplores (actually, no higher in real terms than they have been under Reagan) were Volcker's essential weapon.
- The rate of job growth during the Reagan years has been *lower* than during the Carter years. Overall economic growth has done somewhat better, due to a larger work force, but earnings per worker have continued to stagnate or decline.
- There has been no general tax cut. Most families pay a *larger* share of their income in federal taxes (including FICA) than they did eight years ago. The minority who pay less are mostly the affluent. The share of national income taken by the federal government is higher than eight years ago. So is the number of federal civilian employees.
- Income inequality is greater than at any time since World War II. Even after five years of growth, a greater fraction of Americans are in poverty than at any time during the three administrations that preceded Reagan's.
- The rate of savings as a share of personal income has plummeted. So has investment as a share of gross national product. Meanwhile the import of capital from abroad has soared.

In essence, we have been eating our seed corn—financing a consumption orgy by ignoring the needs of the future and borrowing from foreigners. Reaganomics, which was supposed to wipe out the deficit and promote saving and

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investment, has done exactly the opposite. It also has left a legacy of costly problems—the growing underclass, the ignored environment, the crumbling infrastructure, the tottering banking system, the apparent collapse of our nuclear weapons facilities . . . every day's paper seems to add to the list. These, like the deficit itself, are debits against the future. So, in an only somewhat more ethereal sense, is the social atmosphere of I've-got-mine complacency, of contempt for government as the instrument of our shared values, that has blossomed in the Reagan years.

A related Reagan spiritual legacy is contempt for democracy, as manifested in ethical obtuseness, disdain for the truth, and politics as marketing. Ronald Reagan hardly brought these political vices to Washington, but his era raised the level of cynicism and artifice in politics. In that sense, George Bush's low presidential campaign, run by many of the same people who helped invent and maintain Ronald Reagan, is a legacy of Reaganism as well. Despite the advantage of symbolic incumbency in a prospering economy, Bush has chosen to run a campaign that is almost completely dishonest. His latest turn toward affability, after his attack-dog strategy had done its damage, is only the final cynical artifice.

The Bush campaign's dishonesty has been on several levels. At the relatively trivial level are assertions such as the one that Dukakis "raised taxes five times" and governs a state deservedly known as "Taxachusetts." Various state taxes have gone up and down during Dukakis's tenure, but overall the tax burden has dropped; Massachusetts ranks 35th among states in taxes as a fraction of income. Is it an impossibly high standard to expect a would-be president of the United States to eschew this kind of petty misrepresentation?

FAR MORE SERIOUS are the large symbolic issues manufactured out of minutiae such as the Pledge of Allegiance business, the Massachusetts furlough program, and so on. On each of these there has been deliberate factual misrepresentation. Millions of voters, for example, now think that Massachusetts is the only state with a furlough program for first-degree murderers. (To repeat: Governor Reagan called California's "a great success" after a furloughed criminal murdered a policeman in 1972.) More important than the literal falsehood, though, is the symbolic falsehood: the suggestion that Dukakis is unpatriotic and indifferent to crime. All of Bush's symbolic thrusts—the Pledge, the furloughs, the ACLU, "Massachusetts/Boston/Harvard," the death penalty—are designed to generate an ugly majoritarian ressentiment against cultural outsiders. The manipulation of symbols in the furlough case—using media saturation to stamp black rapist Willie Horton into the national consciousness—has been coolly racist.

Symbols have their legitimate place in politics, of course. But despite the protestations of Bush's more sophisticated advocates, these ginned-up symbolic controversies do not touch on any valid larger issues facing the presidency. The next president, be he Bush or Dukakis, isn't going to spend a lot of energy worrying about violent crime, which is a state matter. Nor, we suspect, will he have the luxury of time to fret about any supposed lack of patriotic ardor in the country. The Bush scriptwriters have used symbols to avoid rather than to elucidate the really important larger presidential challenges, which are primarily economic. Moreover, Bush's dishonest symbolic issues are building blocks in the grand unifying lie of his campaign: the lie about who George Bush is and who Michael Dukakis is.

ESSENTIALLY, Bush has portrayed Michael Dukakis as an extremist weirdo in order to portray himself as someone very much like the real Michael Dukakis. While excoriating "liberals," Bush—who has visited many places on the political spectrum in his day—plants his own flag this time in terrain that is sometimes called "neoliberal." That is, he wishes to be perceived as fiscally responsible and against "big government," but by no means opposed in principle to the use of government to serve perceived social needs. On issue after issue in this campaign—the environment, child care, college costs, health insurance, the homeless—he has proposed new government initiatives to display his "kinder, gentler" side.

In fact, a better description than "neoliberalism" for Bush's domestic policy views might be "hypocrisy": he's happy to throw money around like an old-fashioned liberal, especially for established middle-class entitlements such as Social Security, but won't admit the need to pay the bill. He shares this hypocrisy with the electorate, of course. Surely, though, the candidate who more closely represents a true "postliberal" (new word) synthesis—compassion and managerial competence, a principled belief in government combined with a principled fiscal conservatism, hope with skepticism, optimism chastened by experience—is the Democratic two-term governor, Michael Dukakis.

Dukakis was not our first choice for the Democratic nomination. Some of our reservations last spring—about his charmless hauteur, his lack of vision, and his left-wing foreign policy views—have been borne out in the fall campaign. Nevertheless, we unhesitatingly prefer Dukakis to George Bush. On the charm question, we even respect his flinty inability to submit to a professional charm transplant, in contrast to the ever-malleable Bush. It's said that in the media age an ability to communicate "likability" is a valid aspect of presidential leadership, not a mere campaign device. Perhaps so. But it is surely another sign of political decadence when manufactured likability becomes the central factor in a presidential campaign. Dukakis is clearly a decent man; also an intelligent, honest, and hardworking man—not personal qualities to be sneered at after eight years of Ronald Reagan. Certainly nothing in George Bush's social background or government career suggests that he has any genuinely greater empathy for ordinary folks or a more energetic commitment to make their lives better.

Dukakis exaggerates the "Massachusetts miracle," both in general and in its policy particulars. Nevertheless, he has been a successful governor, both as a competent administrator and as a creative policy entrepreneur. As was said in

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these pages several months ago: "Dukakis's philosophy of government seems to be exactly the right one: let capitalism do its powerful thing, but don't shy away from using the state to nurture it and spread its blessings more fairly." Republicans didn't always think that governorship of a major state was insufficient qualification for the presidency. Dukakis's eight-year experience as governor, it seems to us, compares favorably with Bush's mostly ceremonial "experience" in Washington, which has left no noticeable mark on anything. Yet genuine experience has become a disadvantage in American politics. The richer your record, the more material there is for your opponent's negative researchers, looking for nuggets to blow out of proportion; meanwhile, the harder it is for your own professional handlers to remake you from scratch to fit current needs. More political decadence.

Of course the best (or worst) evidence of political decadence is the failure of this campaign to engage seriously the most important task facing the next president: putting our fiscal house in order. The "twin towers" of government deficit and trade deficit, serious problems in themselves, are also a metaphor for a self-indulgent society whose leadership refuses to challenge it in any way. Ask not what you can do for your country. The best that can be said of Dukakis's campaign stance on this matter is that he has been marginally less deceitful than Bush. It may take only a minor crisis to propel the innately prudent President Dukakis to take the necessary steps, which obviously include both raising taxes and cutting middle-class entitlements. A President Read-My-Lips Bush will not act until a major crisis forces his hand. Furthermore, based on the Dukakis record and the Reagan record (Bush has no record), there's every reason to suppose that Dukakis will apportion the necessary adjustments more equitably.

Our concerns about Dukakis's foreign policy remain. However "neoliberal" he may be on domestic issues, his worldview, until suspiciously recently, was standard-issue McGovernite left, made worse, if anything, by his one personal twist of earnest but naive legalism. A President Dukakis would have endorsed the nuclear freeze, thereby denying us the INF treaty that saw the removal of Soviet missiles in Europe. He would have cut off the *contras* early on, leaving us today with a consolidated and expansionist Marxist regime in Nicaragua. Whether a Dukakis foreign policy would have produced the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan, the impending settlement in Angola, and other successes of the Reaganite hard-line is dubious at the least.

However, despite Bush's snarly rhetoric, the actual foreign policy views of both political parties and their standard-bearers—the Republicans' as much as the Democrats'—have evolved to the point where we are almost back to that utopian ideal of every high-minded editorial writer: a bipartisan foreign policy. Reagan and Bush now defer to no one in expressing their eagerness for better relations and more arms control deals with the Soviets. Few Democratic leaders now reflexively oppose the use of force to protect American interests and values in the world.

On the crucial question of defense spending, Bush and Dukakis are in *total* agreement that it should be level in real terms. The difference is that Dukakis shows some practical understanding of how to maximize our strength under that constraint, while Bush luxuriates in a Reaganlike dream world of endless cost-free weaponry. Our national security in the near future depends less on varying worldviews than on intelligent management of the defense budget, a sound general economy, and a unified and contented society. On all these matters, Dukakis promises to be a better president than Bush.

Dukakis has run a miserable campaign, incompetently failing to rebut Bush's calumnies, yet driven by desperation into misrepresentations and phony issues of his own. His insistence after nomination that the campaign would be about "competence" not "ideology" was a failure of nerve that sadly has turned into its own fitting punishment. It was both disingenuous *and* incompetent. But competence—certainly competence in the techniques of post-Reagan American politics—is *not* the proper standard for seriously judging a politician. Bush's campaign raises—indeed, answers—questions about him that are a lot more fundamental.

Finally, there is Dan Quayle. No, he's not qualified to be president of the United States. It's not his youth (who cares?) or his lack of experience (Geraldine Ferraro had less). It's his shimmering callowness, his empty head, his manifest lack of gravitas. Quayle is the Republican Party's ultimate expression of contempt for the American voter. (Bush was the penultimate.) Quayle was selected precisely as an empty vessel into which the professionals could pour a political persona of their own devising. They seem, finally, to have miscalculated, though probably not fatally so. Quayle easily could end up president, just as Bush himself—a figure almost as shallow chosen eight years ago in calculations almost as commercial—now is favored to become president.

If Bush wins, the Republicans will proclaim that their fifth victory in six presidential elections proves a fundamental rejection of liberalism by the American voter. They will conveniently forget the filthy campaign they have waged, their own candidate's adoption of about two-thirds of the liberal program, the personality matters that both sides consider so important at the moment. By this legerdemain, they will attempt to turn a tactical victory into an ideological mandate. Whether Bush has any use for such a mandate is anybody's guess. His career has displayed no passionate commitment to political values of any sort. We think there's a better option, and we think it's still not too late.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE CHEAPEST SHOT: The cheapest shot of the 1988 campaign? Competition is fierce, for sure. But our vote, at least so far, goes to the repeated Bush-Quayle criticism of what they call "the Jimmy Carter grain embargo"—the cutoff of

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grain sales to the Soviet Union after the invasion of Afghanistan. "I would never use food as a political tool," promises George Bush, pandering to farmers. While accusing the Democrats of being soft on defense, he thus also forswears one of the mildest weapons in the foreign policy arsenal and attacks the one foreign policy initiative of the past decade that required any genuine political courage. The tough-guy Republican foreign policy has generally been a free-lunch foreign policy: a defense buildup we haven't paid for, no draft, petty victories in places like Libya and Grenada. Now Bush declares that no circumstance will cause him to stop selling grain to the Soviet Union. Not even an invasion of Eastern Europe? Nothing? What could be softer than that?

□ FUNNY FOOTNOTE CONTEST: *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Oxford University Press, 1988) contains the following passage: "As still another poem represents this moment of clarity:

> Said, "Monkey, I'm not kicking your ass for lyin'
> I'm kicking your hairy ass for *signifyin'*." (p. 172)[19]

. . ." Footnote 19 reads: "A clear example of paradigmatic contiguity is the addition of the metonym 'hairy' as an adjective for 'ass' in the second quoted line." The usual modest prize (a year's subscription to TNR, or a TNR T-shirt) will be awarded for the best superior example of a humorous academic footnote. One guideline: sheer length is no asset. As in the example, judges will award points for many laughs packed into few words.

□ THE RISING SUN, REVISED EDITION: In the latest Japanese whitewashing of World War II history, the Education Ministry recently compelled a Japanese textbook company to replace a section on Japanese atrocities with a story based on the musical *My Fair Lady*. At this rate, it won't be long before the only thing young Japanese are taught about the war is that the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Japan's apologists try to blame these revisionist tendencies on the country's right-wing fringe. That doesn't wash. Several mainstream members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party have aggressively defended Japan's wartime behavior. Protests by China and other countries have forced some of these revanchists to resign or apologize, but it's doubtful that they've repented. To paraphrase Santayana, those who cannot learn from the past are condemned to rewrite it.

□ OBJECT LESSON: Algeria has now joined the list of Arab countries that have given Israel a lesson in how to deal with protest and dissent. Although there was no challenge to the government's sovereignty—nothing that really qualifies as an uprising—the Algerians managed to kill at least 500 demonstrators, hundreds more than the Israelis have killed in trying for nearly a year now to control the Palestinian uprising. We're still waiting for the anguished outcries from around the world.

CAMPAIGN '88

VULTURES

IF THE Democratic Party and its presidential candidate need another good reason to rouse themselves and fight—besides the obvious one of avoiding a humiliating defeat, the fifth in the past six elections—it should be this: the aftermath of defeat—the recriminations, the soul-searching, the battle for the future of the party—will be horrendous. The muttering has already begun. Left, right, and center, the factions will blame Dukakis and his advisers for blowing a winnable election.

The party's ideological factions will also immediately fall to fighting for the 1992 nomination. Jesse Jackson and his supporters will say that Dukakis, fearing the liberal label, abandoned the party's true progressive agenda, wrote a say-nothing platform, nominated a conservative for vice president, and failed to mobilize the army of disaffected non-voters that awaits a call to arms. On November 9, Jackson will be the party's 1992 front-runner. It's not impossible for him to win the nomination. If he does, the Democrats will go the way of the British Labour Party and lose six out of seven elections.

On the other side, the party's "conservative" wing—which is really moderate by every national standard and includes the Democratic Leadership Council, Southerners such as Lloyd Bentsen, and backers of Senators Albert Gore, Sam Nunn, and Bill Bradley—will say not only that Dukakis was too liberal and yielded too much to Jackson at the Democratic National Convention, but that the party has to repair its philosophy and nominating procedures to have any chance of winning a national election except perhaps during a depression.

The first round of conflict is likely to come over the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee. Ron Brown, a black Washington lawyer who was Jackson's convention manager, might be Dukakis's choice if he wins and in that case would be a party-unifying figure. As a former campaign aide to Edward Kennedy and deputy chairman of the party, Brown is considered qualified for the job. But in the context of a Dukakis defeat and a certain 1992 Jackson candidacy, Brown will be seen as Jackson's man. "He will never be elected," one white DNC member said.

The candidate of the party regulars is Michigan state chair Rick Wiener, whose candidacy could set up a nasty black-Jewish contest. Sam Nunn and other DLC members—"the Rhett Butler brigade," former Jackson aide Ann Lewis calls them—are casting around for a third possibility and have talked about former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt or a former Southern governor such as South Carolina's Dick Riley or Mississippi's William Winter.

Better this internecine combat should take place in the Republican Party—and it would, if somehow Dukakis could recover and win. "Whichever party loses will have an ideological bloodbath," says John Buckley, former press

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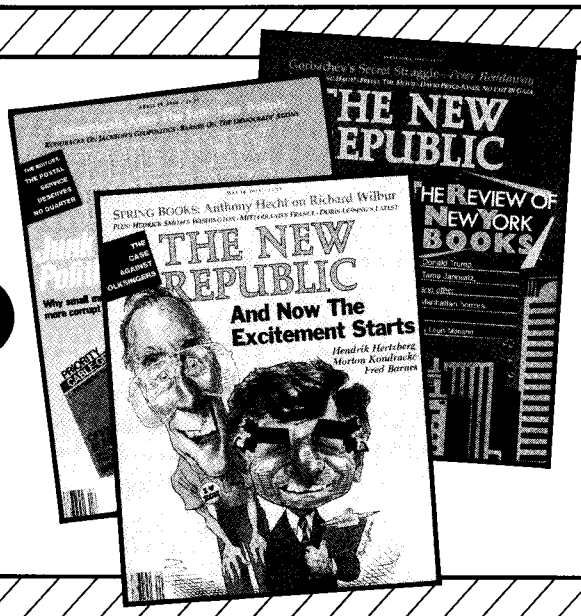

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secretary to Jack Kemp. If Bush blew his tremendous lead, the conservative movement would be revived, and immediately Kemp, Colorado Senator William Armstrong, and Texas Senator Phil Gramm would be running for president, plus Pat Robertson.

If Bush wins, those conservatives have to figure out what to do with their lives. One thing they will do is watch Vice President Dan Quayle very closely to see if he grows into the office. If he's an embarrassment, he might be replaced in '92, or be challengeable for the presidential nomination in 1996. The other thing the conservatives will do is to watch Bush for signs of errancy from the Reagan religion. If Bush names a moderate Republican Cabinet, goes too far with the "gentler, kinder nation" agenda of day care, education, and environmental controls, ignores the right's values issues, and—especially—makes non-conservative appointments to the Supreme Court, the right will scream.

Except for Robertson, though, it's hard to see anyone running against Bush, unless he does all of the above and is also a failure as president. It's almost official dogma among Democrats that Bush—or anyone elected president this year—is destined to be a latter-day Herbert Hoover and preside over the collapse that Democrats deem the inevitable and appropriate result of Reagan-era profligacy. That's thought to be the reason why smart people like Bradley and Mario Cuomo didn't run this time: they want to be FDR.

BUT IF THE crash does not come, then Bush is likely to try to extend Republican dominance beyond the presidential level. Once Republican national chairman himself, he is thought likely to appoint a strong party-builder—perhaps outgoing New Hampshire Governor John Sununu—and concentrate on Project 1991, the Republican effort to capture enough state legislative seats and governorships in 1990 to draw congressional reapportionment maps that give the Republicans a chance for at least ideological control of the House in the 1990s.

Democrats are fond of noting that the Reagan era did not bring the once-expected grand party realignment, since both Houses of Congress are firmly in Democratic hands (and the Democrats might gain two or three seats this year), as are a majority of statehouses. But realignment is possible over the long term. Party identification has changed significantly during the 1980s. In 1980, according to CBS polling, 23 percent of the electorate considered itself Republican, 46 percent Democrat, and 27 percent independent. This month those numbers are, respectively, 32, 38, and 31—closing the party allegiance gap from 23 points to six.

If Dukakis loses, and especially if he loses as badly as the polls now indicate, in which direction will the Democratic Party turn? It would be suicidal to turn left, to Jesse Jackson. If George McGovern and Walter Mondale were wiped out, and if Dukakis faces defeat because only 15 percent of the electorate considers itself liberal, then Jackson seemingly would be demolished by any reasonable Republican. What's more, this year Jackson got only 29 percent of the overall Democratic primary vote and only 14 percent of the white Democratic vote.

And yet, as elections analyst William Schneider puts it, "When parties lose and lose and lose, instead of being browbeaten to the center, they say 'to hell with it' and go to extreme fundamentalism." He thinks that five straight Republican losses led to the rise of Joe McCarthy and that the failures of moderate Labourites Harold Wilson and James Callaghan in Britain led to the takeover by Michael Foot.

Furthermore, Jackson is widely portrayed as the "conscience" of the Democratic Party and is perceived to have made significant political gains in 1988. Jackson's share of the Democratic primary vote did grow from 18 percent in 1984 to 29 percent in 1988, and he significantly increased his percentage of the white vote in certain key states. But he did better in 1988 partly because no other Democrat challenged him for black votes (as Mondale did in 1984), and because he was the most left-wing candidate in the race and Dukakis's lone rival in the late primaries. Still, Jackson could win the nomination next time—or at least a spot on the ticket—through momentum, purist fervor, and the defection of former moderate Democrats who will have voted three times in a row for a Republican—and now not only the charmer Ronald Reagan, but country-clubber George Bush.

A DUKAKIS LOSS might mean that the Democratic Party needs a real fight over why it lost and what it ought to stand for. In 1988 no candidate dared say that Jackson's foreign policies were radical and that his soak-the-rich domestic policies would kill productivity. No candidate dared frontally challenge him in the black community, either. Dukakis won the nomination by outorganizing and outfinancing his rivals, not by outarguing them on the issues. Even though it's conventional wisdom that the Iowa caucuses were irrelevant this year, Dukakis and every other candidate except Albert Gore strove to pass the litmus tests—on nuclear weapons and farm production controls—set up by the state's left-wing activists. These have provided ammunition for George Bush.

The polls suggest Bush has used them well and that it's all over for 1988. It's hard to see how Dukakis can pull a victory out of an Electoral College so skewed against him. If so, arguably, in 1992 there will be a better cast of candidates—Bradley, a more seasoned Gore, a steadier and better financed Richard Gephardt, possibly Nunn, possibly Cuomo, possibly a Southern governor like Bill Clinton of Arkansas. But if there is no economic crisis, those candidates need a better message than Dukakis has mustered.

If there is yet a chance for Dukakis, it lies in this: having shed Mondale's pessimism, he still must convince voters that what he wants to do—"invest" on a non-costly basis in education and economic development—really would "make America No. 1 again" and revive the American dream for the average worker, and that the Republican program will not. If he can't do it, the challenge for 1992 Democrats will be not just to avoid Iowa's litmus tests, to seem warmer than Dukakis has been, or better organized, but to develop a real-growth message for America.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

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THE PRESS

UNWITTING ACCOMPLICES

GEORGE BUSH is a cynical guy. With a straight face, he bashed the press during his second nationally televised debate with Michael Dukakis. Bush complained that serious discussion of issues just doesn't get covered, citing a speech of his on agriculture that reporters ignored. "Why? Because you're so interested in a poll that might have been coming out," he said. "Or because somebody had said something nasty about somebody else." The press is "fascinated with . . . who's up or down today and who's going to be up or down tomorrow."

Bush was right about all this. But what makes his criticism cynical is that he's benefited from exactly the kind of coverage he denounced. Reporters haven't aided Bush intentionally. Most of the ones I know think he's a weenie, or worse. But they can't help themselves. In covering the presidential race, they're obsessed with conflict, polls, and tactics. The conventions of mainstream journalism give them wide latitude to comment on these things. While they aren't allowed to judge specific issues such as Bush's "flexible freeze" or Dukakis's health insurance scheme, they're free to say who's winning or losing a fight, or to interpret poll results. So that's what they do.

How does this aid Bush? Take conflict. The sharpest conflict in the campaign came in late August and early September, the weeks following the Republican convention. Bush was the aggressor, attacking Dukakis on national security, the Pledge of Allegiance, the furlough program for Massachusetts convicts, his membership in the American Civil Liberties Union, and the death penalty. The press seized on Bush's charges, letting him set the agenda. True, there was some huffing about mudslinging and demagoguery. But Bush's unrelenting attacks got coverage. Whatever Dukakis was saying in his speeches paled in comparison, so the press concentrated on his response to Bush.

This played poorly for Dukakis on television, the only medium that matters in presidential campaigns now. On the "NBC Nightly News" on August 25, for example, there were separate reports on Bush and Dukakis. In both, Dukakis was on the defensive. The Bush report opened with Lloyd Bentsen's appearance at a VFW convention. He was booed for extolling Dukakis. Bush was shown as a World War II pilot and a favorite of the VFW. "George Bush, honored veteran, has emerged as the persona the [Bush] campaign thinks it can win with," said NBC correspondent Dennis Murphy. Bush had a clever sound bite: "I don't understand why my opponent seems to oppose the development of every new weapon since the slingshot." Then came the Dukakis report. "Governor Dukakis was almost belligerent when asked if he's explained his defense program adequately," began Tom Pettit. Dukakis's sound bite was weak: on defense, there are "some people who agree with us, some people who don't."

Reports like those were devastating to Dukakis. In the primaries, he got favorable coverage, but that changed once the campaign against Bush started. His coverage has been even more negative than Bush's, especially in the weeks after the GOP convention. That was the crucial period, the weeks in which the race turned against Dukakis. S. Robert Lichter, co-director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, found that 44 percent of the TV evening news reports on Bush were favorable in the three weeks after the convention. Only 26 percent on Dukakis were. In other words, the coverage was brimming with attacks on Dukakis.

The press did Dukakis no favor with polls that put him 16 to 18 points ahead of Bush after the Democratic convention in August. "When Dukakis was that far in front, he was inevitably set up for a bad fall," says Democratic pollster Greg Schneiders. Much of Dukakis's lead was artificial, the result of favorable coverage of the Democratic convention. Bush would cut further into the lead by getting a boost out of the GOP convention. And he was going to be helped even more by peace and prosperity. The point is that losing Dukakis's big lead wouldn't be Dukakis's fault. But the press blamed him anyway. Reporters cover the day-to-day events of the campaign and assume these must be driving the voters. "They miss the possibility that the public re-evaluates the candidates in terms of its general feeling about how things are going," says Lichter. "Sometimes they're too close to the story."

Dukakis has been zinged in virtually every poll, and there are scores more of them this year than ever before. The TV networks, including CNN, conduct frequent polls. The *Washington Times* and the Presidential Hotline provide daily tracking results. When Bush climbed from ten points behind to a 47 to 40 percent lead over Dukakis in its late August poll, the *Wall Street Journal* concluded that voters felt Bush "has managed to climb out of Ronald Reagan's shadow and onto his shoulders." Dukakis was faulted. He "hasn't succeeded in sharply conveying to people who he is and what he stands for." In late September the *New York Times* noted that Bush was gaining in polls of Reagan Democrats, and ran capsule statements from Democrats who'd jumped to Bush. Naturally they trashed Dukakis. With so many poll stories, says Lichter, the press is "creating news" and "accelerating the change in public opinion."

The worst poll story for Dukakis came on October 12, when ABC's "World News Tonight" devoted half its show to one survey. Dukakis came off as a political dud. "Dukakis has failed to exploit his message of economic competence," said Lynn Sher. "In the trenches of the day-to-day struggle, the Democrats seem to be faltering," said Jim Wooten. Consultant David Garth dumped on Dukakis for failing "to offer an overarching theme for voters to grasp" and for saying the election was about competence. "We expect our accountants to be competent," said Garth. "We want our presidents to be leaders." Brit Hume said Bush planned no changes in his campaign. Everything was working well.

The ABC story drew howls of protest from the Dukakis campaign. But it was worse only in degree, not kind, from other poll pieces. Bush has gotten more favorable treat-

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ment because his tactics have worked. "Bush has so far succeeded in both setting the agenda for the campaign and in raising doubts about Dukakis," said Lisa Myers on the "NBC Nightly News" on September 22. She cited a poll and ran a snatch from a Bush speech. "Are we going to gamble our future on a liberal Democrat coming out of nowhere?" Bush said. Myers signed off by noting that voters "overwhelmingly think [Dukakis] would be less able to maintain a strong defense."

Reporters reward candidates for successful tactics and flawless stagecraft and punish candidates for not having them. The tacit analogy is that the candidate whose campaign is better run would make the better president. On Labor Day, Bush was praised by Brit Hume for a "well-choreographed appearance at a San Diego fish-packing plant." Bush showed up later with U.S. Olympic team members and at a police picnic, giving himself "a three-base hit in political symbolism on the day, dock workers, athletes, and cops." In contrast, Sam Donaldson of ABC couldn't resist mentioning Dukakis's encounter with a bad microphone. This "called into question the competency of the Dukakis campaign's advance planning." Donaldson's conclusion was that "the usual punch of the traditional Labor Day campaign opening was missing." No doubt Hume and Donaldson gave accurate accounts. Together, they sent the message that Bush is more capable than Dukakis. That may be true, but not because Bush's stump appearances were better staged.

In the debate, Bush threw another bomb at the press for criticizing Dan Quayle, his running mate. "I've never seen such a pounding, an unfair pounding, on a young senator in my entire life," he said. Here again, the press aided Bush. The toughest time for Quayle was in the weeks following the Republican convention. He became the lightning rod for the Republican ticket. (Bush performed this role ably for President Reagan in the 1984 campaign.) This freed Bush to slam away at Dukakis without any backlash from the press. Reporters spent themselves in hounding Quayle. Had Bush known this when he was picking a veep, he might have chosen Quayle for just that reason. Bush is cynical, but not that cynical.

FRED BARNES

China's new brat pack.

SINOTRASH

WHEN ZHAO ZIYANG, head of China's Communist Party, met with *USA Today*'s JetCapade news team in China in May, he told them that he often "sits around his dinner table debating domestic problems with his sons." He did not tell them, however, that one of his sons was in Boston, not Beijing. Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader, is no more likely to brag to foreign reporters that he has a grandson who could be a U.S. citizen. The boy was born in America when Deng's son, Deng Zhifang, was a physics grad student at the University of Rochester in New York.

Deng and Zhao aren't the only Chinese leaders with sons or daughters studying in the United States. Even as Chinese conservatives rail against "bourgeois liberalism" and "wholescale Westernization," the children of China's ruling cadres are flocking to U.S. campuses. Now what started as a minor ideological embarrassment may end up not only costing even more of the Party's dwindling popular credibility but threatening the survival of its inner core.

SINCE student exchanges were established between the United States and the People's Republic of China, some 30,000 Chinese students have come to the United States—the most from any Communist country. According to Jerry Qian, product of Rutgers and son of the vice minister of transportation, "All the high-level cadres have kids overseas—about 50 percent in the U.S. and the rest in Japan and Europe." One Chinese scientist recently back from a trip to the United States said the Chinese students he met "all told me they were the children of so-and-so. They want people to know it." Even the offspring of China's most hard-line Communists aren't immune to this form of "spiritual pollution." When Yu Qiuli, the conservative former Politburo member and powerful ex-director of the political department of the Chinese army, called on Chinese youth to "resist corruption by decadent capitalist ideas," he neglected to mention that his daughter and son-in-law—both of whom studied in the United States—have been working for the consulting firm of Henry Kissinger, current capitalist roader and ex-running dog.

For all their apparent hypocrisy, Yu and other conservatives have good reason to be worried. Yu's daughter and son-in-law aren't paid by Kissinger Associates to make deals for the motherland. Neither is Peng Xiaofei, who's currently a Sloan Fellow at MIT. (Not bad for someone who never graduated college, and whose work experience consists of one year spent at the China Petro-Chemical International Company.) Peng's father was formerly head of the Petroleum Ministry, which granted one of the first offshore drilling concessions to the British Petroleum Corporation, which just happens to be picking up Peng's $37,000 academic tab. "Our company has a good relationship with BP," said Peng. "I know their chairman." More important for BP, the chairman now knows Peng.

Who knows what ideological baggage will accompany the educated elite when they come back from the West. Qian Jiahua, daughter of China's former minister of health and currently a cancer immunologist at the National Institute of Health, said that what she likes about America is that "discussion is open here." Added Yu's son-in-law, in words that would no doubt make the Old Guard shudder, "Those who have been abroad can make contributions to Chinese society that those who haven't can't. They bring back new political and economic concepts."

Unlike some of their more plebeian countrymen, most

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sons and daughters of Party leaders *do* plan on coming home. The temptations of the good life in the United States are nothing compared with what their status confers on them in China. Said Huan Guochang, who received a Ph.D. from Princeton and whose uncle is director of Beijing's Center for International Studies, "They are nobody here. If they go back they will be at the top of society." But sensitive to a potential brain drain and political iconoclasm among those who do return, Beijing is making it harder for students to go abroad. It will grant 3,000 students government scholarships next year, 600 of whom will end up in the United States. To discourage students from staying too long, Beijing is also denying visas to wives and children and imposing stiff fines on those who overstay.

So far, though, the net effect of the clampdown on study abroad has been to stir up resentment among the less privileged. "Everyone criticizes high-level officials for implementing the rules after their kids have already gotten out," commented one Chinese student now at the Manhattan School of Music. That homegrown resentment may ultimately do more damage to the Party than any imported ideological impurity. Said one Chinese student of relatively humble lineage at Harvard, "Even until 1980 people still believed in the Chinese Communist Party. Now they have lost faith because of all the corruption and networking. It's ridiculous how the Party still tries to blame everything on the Gang of Four. It's the way the Party members behave today, and not what happened years ago, that alienates people."

SARAH BURGESS

Sarah Burgess is a former TNR reporter-researcher.

The Iroquois and the Constitution.

FOUNDING FEATHERS

A GROUP OF Iroquois Indians gathered on the Mall in Washington this September to celebrate their emerging victory over American history books. With the help of a few renegade historians and a New York advertising firm, the Iroquois have been persuading the public that their ancestors guided Madison's hand in writing the Constitution. Indeed, in October the Senate and House passed resolutions acknowledging "the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the U.S. Constitution."

The Mall celebration was as hokey an affair as one would expect, complete with ritual incantations and an awkward, come-join-in dance. (About half of the 100 or so in attendance did join in.) Iroquois chiefs from three different tribes spoke at the ceremony, which was hosted by LaDonna Harris, president of a lobby group called Americans for Indian Opportunity. Before Mohawk Chief Jake Swamp took center stage to deliver his incantation, Harris asked the audience to refrain from taking photographs or using video cameras. She urged everyone to "get into the mood," to "keep harmony with nature." It was to be a primeval moment. Chief Swamp then stepped up to the microphone. "I don't mind," he said. "The video cameras can continue to roll."

The successes of the Iroquois campaign are impressive. The ceremony on the Mall was officially sanctioned by the U.S. Constitution Bicentennial Commission. The House and Senate resolutions passed easily. And in New York the Iroquois have almost succeeded in rewriting the history textbooks—their revision of a teacher's manual is awaiting approval from the state board of education. All this to further an idea with no discernible merit. The notion that the Iroquois somehow influenced the writing of the Constitution is dismissed by virtually every reputable historian with knowledge of the subject: Michael Kammen, author of *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture*, calls the idea "a colossal myth." A scholar of Indian history says the Senate vote "destroys my faith in the historical literacy of the Senate."

The myth isn't just silly, it's destructive. Whatever brief boost the rewriting of history may provide for Iroquois self-esteem, it steals attention from the many real and persistent problems now facing the country's 1.4 million Native Americans—the Iroquois included.

Supporters of the Iroquois claim to constitutional fame assert that the Constitution's system of checks and balances, and its emphasis on the "rights of the people," were lifted from the Great Law—the Iroquois equivalent of a constitution. Some advocates go even further than that. Donald Grinde, a professor of history at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo whose research is supported by Americans for Indian Opportunity, argues that "Iroquois political theory is an integral part of the political theory of America—before, during, and after the making of the Constitution."

Even a cursory examination of Indian history indicates otherwise. There are six distinct tribes within the Iroquois: Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras. At some point—no one's exactly sure, but it was before Columbus landed—they joined to form the Iroquois Confederacy. For all the supposed connections between this confederacy and the government adopted by the United States in 1787, a comparison of the two doesn't yield a lot of eerie parallels. The Iroquois Confederacy was ultimately matriarchal. Under the Great Law, the fundamental source of authority were the clan mothers, senior members of their tribes. The clan mothers selected the chief statesmen, each of whom served on the Grand Council "as long as the women judge(d) him to be fulfilling his responsibility." The council was not proportionally representative—the biggest tribe, in fact, had the fewest representatives—and it ruled by unanimous consent. It did not meet regularly, only when necessary. Obviously, Western civilization, beginning in Greece, had provided models of government much closer to the hearts of the Founding Fathers than this one. There was nothing

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to be gained by looking to the New World for inspiration.

Grinde and seven collaborators are presently writing a book detailing their claims, but they have yet to find a publisher. Considering the caliber of their arguments, that's not surprising. Among the evidence adduced by Grinde in his Senate testimony: In 1894 Eliot Danforth, then treasurer of New York state, opined that the Iroquois's plan of government was "adopted by our states and our national republic." In 1976 a now-defunct Indian newspaper called *Wassaja* asserted that the U.S. form of government "was copied from the Iroquois Confederacy." Still not convinced? Well, in November 1987, Grinde notes, Senator Daniel Inouye introduced a resolution to the Senate acknowledging the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy to the . . . Wait a minute. Grinde is citing the Senate resolution in support of itself.

The argument of Grinde and his colleagues, to be sure, goes beyond appeals to authority. He succeeds in demonstrating something that no one ever doubted: Indian culture significantly influenced colonial culture, and some of the Founding Fathers were aware of the Iroquois form of government. But his attempts to do more than that invariably fail. Thus, he is correct in noting that in August 1787, as the Constitution was being drafted, a Philadelphia publication printed a reference to the Great Law of the Iroquois that included the phrase "Unite, or Die." But the concept of national unity, it is safe to say, had solidified by that point in American history. Nor was this the debut of the idea that unity is sometimes the only alternative to destruction. Notwithstanding the consistent weakness of Grinde's case, the claim of an Iroquois constitutional connection took the form of bald assertion in a series of TV and print ads—"public service" ads—sponsored by the American Indian Institute and the American Indian Artists.

UNFORTUNATELY, the debate over the historical role of the Iroquois is academic in more ways than one. All the scholarly and political posturing tends to obscure the problems of modern-day Native Americans. In 1986 they had the highest rates of alcoholism and teenage suicide of any ethnic group in the United States. Unemployment in some Native American communities is estimated at between 50 and 65 percent. The Iroquois are hardly beyond these concerns. The Mohawks, who live mainly along the St. Lawrence River, have a wider array of health and environmental problems than most tribes. The National Congress of American Indians tries to get the federal government to address these issues, but the results are mixed, at best. "We've been very successful in getting our points of view across," says Suzan Harjo, executive director of the NCAI. "But getting Congress to act on them is another matter."

The Native American Rights Fund, which works through the courts to solve Indian problems, has also fallen short of many of its goals. Even though the NARF has won several recent cases on voting rights and land claims, says Tom LeClaire, an NARF staff attorney, "most of the cases that are settled still require some sort of congressional action."

House Concurrent Resolution 331—the one that congratulates the Iroquois for their contributions to the Constitution—sailed through with 400 votes. Its companion resolution passed the Senate by an equally lopsided vote. It's clear these Iroquois are not politically inept. What's unclear is whether they can put their political acumen to use in ways that matter.

MICHAEL NEWMAN

Bush plays it safe.

WHAT IF . . . ?

Excerpts from Bush campaign press releases for final two weeks of campaign.

Oct. 26: Bush "Fit As A Fiddle," Personal Physician Says

Dr. Rodney Savage, personal physician to George Bush, said today that the vice president is in "excellent" health following his annual examination. "I've rarely seen a man more likely to live another eight years," said Savage.

Oct. 27: Vice President Pledges "Rigorous" Maintenance Program For Air Force One

Campaigning in Seattle today, George Bush told a cheering crowd that in a Bush administration, the presidential plane's safety inspections would be "second to none."

Oct. 28: Bush To Avoid "Troubled Areas" As President

George Bush told an enthusiastic audience in Cleveland, Ohio, that he does not foresee traveling to "any" areas of the globe that could be classified "even loosely" as "having turmoil." Later, at an impromptu airport press conference, the vice president vowed to ask Congress to "quadruple" the budget of the Executive Protection Agency, the branch of the Secret Service charged with the president's security.

Oct. 29: Baker Announces Plans For New White House Medical Capability

Campaign Chariman James A. Baker III told reporters today that as president, George Bush will convert part of the West Wing into a "state of the art" medical facility, including an operating room staffed "round the clock." The space is currently occupied by the White House press corps, which will be relocated in the Old Executive Office Building.

Oct. 30: Bush To Renounce Pork Rinds, Fuller Says

Vice Presidential Chief of Staff Craig A. Fuller said today that as part of Bush's New Year's resolutions, he will "reluctantly" give up eating pork rinds, which have been linked to heart disease and cancer. Fuller joked that the vice president is "well-aware" that today is not New Year's Eve.

Oct. 31: New Presidential Limousine To Be Made Of Titanium

Chief of Staff Craig T. Fuller revealed today that as president, George Bush will travel in a limousine made entirely of titanium, "one of the most indestructible metals known to science."

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Nov. 1: Titanium Not Radioactive, Fuller Assures

Chief of Staff Craig R. Fuller countered media reports that titanium is a radioactive substance, dangerous to humans. "People hear the sound '-anium' and immediately they think 'Oh oh,' " he said, "but in this case, it is simply not true."

Nov. 2: Vice President Relaxes On "Rest Day" By Playing Five Sets With Wimbledon Champ

An ebullient George Bush played an entire afternoon of tennis with former Wimbledon champion Jimmy Connors today. "To paraphrase the president," said Bush, "there's nothing so good for the outside of a man as the inside of a tennis racket, or whatever."

Nov. 3: Fuller Denies Claims of Bush Injury

Chief of Staff Craig O. Fuller dismissed as "absurd" rumors—originating in the campaign of the governor of Massachusetts—that George Bush was admitted to Bethesda Naval Hospital late last night. "This doesn't surprise us one bit," said Fuller. "They've been trying to drag this campaign into the mud all along."

In completely unrelated matters, Campaign Manager Lee Atwater announced that the vice president was canceling today's scheduled appearances in order to "fine-tune" his nationally televised election-eve speech.

Nov. 4: Bush "Still Working" On Speech

Campaign Manager Lee Atwater discounted as "desperate" the Dukakis camp's assertions that the vice president is "in hiding." Atwater said Bush is closeted with his speechwriter, Peggy Noonan, drafting his election-eve address.

Nov. 5: Bush Jokes About Crutches: "You Should See Connors—He's In A Wheelchair!"

A reinvigorated Vice President Bush today rejoined his campaign following two days of intensive speech preparations and dismissed as "silly" media speculation that he was seriously injured in Tuesday's tennis match with Wimbledon champion Jimmy Connors. "Some people, especially those in the media, see a pair of crutches under a guy's arms and automatically assume, 'Oh oh, Injury City,' " said Bush. "I feel fine. Still, Bar and the doctors insisted on these darn things. But as long as I've got them, George Will better not get within swinging distance!"

Nov. 6: Atwater Decries Dukakis Crutch Remark

Campaign Manager Lee Atwater today slammed the governor of Massachusetts for his "undignified cheap shot" impugning the vice president's physical agility. "This is the sort of thing they crucified Jim Watt for," said an angry Atwater. "I think the governor owes an apology not only to George Bush, but to all injured and handicapped citizens. This is a coast-to-coast affront to American decency."

Nov. 7: Bush Sees "No Need, Ever" To Leave White House As President

In his dramatic election-eve address to the nation tonight, Vice President George Bush pledged "never" to leave the White House during his tenure as president. "One thing all those jobs I've had taught me is, It's rough out there," said the vice president. Chief of Staff Craig Fuller noted that security at the event was "tight."

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY AND PAUL SLANSKY

Christopher Buckley is a writer living in Washington. Paul Slansky is writing a book about the '80s, *The Clothes Have No Emperor*, to be published by Fireside Books.

Debate Three: the remix.

AND WHAT IF . . . ?

Los Angeles

From the very outset of the second and final presidential "debate" of the 1988 general election campaign, there were intimations that this one was going to be different. Miraculously, Michael Dukakis had at last decided to *say* something. That was clear from the way he handled Bernard Shaw's brutal opening question.

"Governor," the Cable News Network anchor asked, "if Kitty Dukakis were raped and murdered, would you favor an irrevocable death penalty for the killer?"

"God forbid," said Dukakis, frowning. "God forbid any harm should come to the person who is dearer to me than anyone or anything on earth. But I'd react the same as anyone. I'd want to kill the scum that did it. I'd want to rip him limb from limb."

The applause was sharp and sudden. But Dukakis was already shaking his head to silence the crowd.

"Now wait, wait. Yes, I would want revenge in that situation. Of course I would. But you don't run a government on that basis. I believe that the premeditated killing of a human being is wrong. Period. I don't care how much the person may deserve it. It's wrong. And it's doubly wrong when the government does it. That's how I feel. So I'm against capital punishment.

"I know that position doesn't get me a lot of political points. I saw a poll the other day where something like 70 percent of the voters disagree with me on this one. It'd be a lot easier for me if I could just stand up here and yell death, death, death, as if that was the answer to the problems of crime and drugs in our society. But I don't think it is the answer. I don't think it works. And more important, as I say, I think it's wrong. And I say this without any disrespect to those who have a different opinion. I know a lot of good people who don't feel the way I do on this. But I have to go with what my conscience tells me.

"One more thing. Violent crime is not some abstract issue to me. It's not something I learned about in a Clint Eastwood movie. My father, a doctor, 77 years old, was gagged, beaten, and robbed by a thief looking for drugs in his office. My brother was killed by a hit-and-run driver. Violent crime is something I take personally. So as gover-

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nor of my state I've gone out and done something about it. We've put violent criminals in jail. We've built more jails. We've shaken up the criminal justice system so that punishment is swifter and surer. And now my state has the lowest murder rate of any industrial state."

AFTER DUKAKIS'S passionate appeal to conscience, George Bush's talk of "values" as a reason for executing what he termed "narcotics drugs kingpins" sounded a trifle tinny. Even so, the vice president nearly held his own for the first half of the debate. The decisive exchange came when *Newsweek*'s Margaret Warner asked Bush about abortion: "Why should a woman who discovers through amniocentesis that her baby will be born with Tay-Sachs disease, for instance, that the baby will live at most two years and those two years in incredible pain, be forced to carry the fetus to term, and yet a woman who becomes pregnant through incest would be allowed to abort her fetus?"

Bush told Warner she had "left out one other exception"—"the health of the mother." He then spoke haltingly and rather touchingly of his late daughter Robin, who died a few months after being diagnosed with leukemia. Bush added that medical science often makes such rapid advances that there is hope even for the most seemingly intractable cases. "And so I just feel this is where I'm coming from," concluded Bush, employing a bit of bell-bottom slang.

Dukakis's memorable reply began in all mildness. "Margaret, Kitty and I had very much the same kind of experience that the Bushes had. We lost a baby, not even an hour old. So we have nothing but sympathy and respect for what they went through. But we're not talking here about what advice we might give to a woman who has to make that agonizing choice. We're talking about taking the choice away from her.

"Let's be clear about the vice president's answer. What is Mr. Bush saying to that young woman who learns that the fetus she is carrying is damaged or deformed? He's saying: No. You can't end that pregnancy. He's saying, too bad you weren't raped, because then maybe we could do something for you. He's saying, if you terminate that pregnancy you're guilty of a criminal act and if you don't go to jail your doctor will.

"George Bush seems like too nice a guy to say this. But it's the clear logic of his position. George, maybe this is another case where you haven't sorted things out. Because what you're saying now is thoughtlessly cruel. That terrible decision about ending a pregnancy under these nightmarish circumstances—that's not George Bush's decision to make, or Michael Dukakis's, or the federal government's. It's up to the woman to make that decision. We can offer her advice. And when she's made her decision we can offer her support and help and love. But let's not add to her suffering by telling her she's a criminal."

Dukakis's answer on abortion wasn't the only time he scored points by expressing a bit more feeling than usual. Bush, responding to a suggestion from Andrea Mitchell of NBC that the voters are fed up with negative campaigning, said that the Democrats were the ones who started it, at their convention—"Do you remember the senator from Boston chanting out there, and the ridicule factor from that lady from Texas that was on there?" Dukakis replied: "Yes, George, you're right—some of our folks did make fun of you a little bit. That's in the great American tradition of political irreverence. But there is no excuse for what you and your campaign have done. You've questioned my patriotism. You've pictured me as a friend of criminals. You've used ugly code words like 'card-carrying' to imply that I am a subversive of some kind. Clean it up, George. You and I are both old enough to remember a guy named Joe McCarthy. In 1954 I was a college kid visiting Washington. I was in the gallery of the Senate chamber when your father, Senator Prescott Bush of Connecticut, courageously voted to censure McCarthy. It's not my place to say what he would have thought of the campaign you've been running. But I can say this: what you've done is little better than McCarthyism."

When Bush attacked Dukakis for being "a liberal" who takes positions that are "very liberal," Dukakis shot back, "If it's liberal to feed the hungry and house the homeless, George, you can call me a liberal. If it's liberal to make sure a young mother can see a doctor when her baby's sick, call me a liberal"—that whole litany. And when Dukakis was asked to name some heroes of today, he hesitated briefly but then, warming to the subject, came up with a surprisingly interesting list: Henry Steele Commager, Lech Walesa, Andrei Sakharov, Robert Coles, Marian Wright Edelman, Everett Koop, Oscar Arias, Leonard Bernstein, Cory Aquino, "and two young men named for a county in Ireland, who fought valiantly in Vietnam and who today fight for peace and justice at home—John Kerry, who was my lieutenant governor in Massachusetts and who now serves our state in the United States Senate, and former Governor Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, who will be joining John in the U.S. Senate next year."

MOMENTS AFTER Dukakis's eloquent closing statement, with its talk of "mastering the future," the spin doctors poured into the press center in UCLA's student union building. You could tell who had "won" by watching the flow of reportorial flesh. There was a near stampede to get to Susan Estrich, Paul Brountas, and the other Dukakis operatives; around James Baker, Lee Atwater, and the other Bushies the crowd was sparse.

Since then, the campaign has taken a dramatic turn. Dukakis's five-point "bounce" in the polls has him almost even with Bush and gaining fast. Local Democratic office-seekers are fighting to get into the picture at Dukakis rallies. Reporters have even spotted a few "jumpers" along Dukakis motorcade routes. The race is still far from over; just a couple of weeks ago, after all, Bush was being touted as a sure winner. He could still make a comeback. He's done it before. But right now the election looks like Dukakis's to lose, or my name's not Joe Isuzu.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

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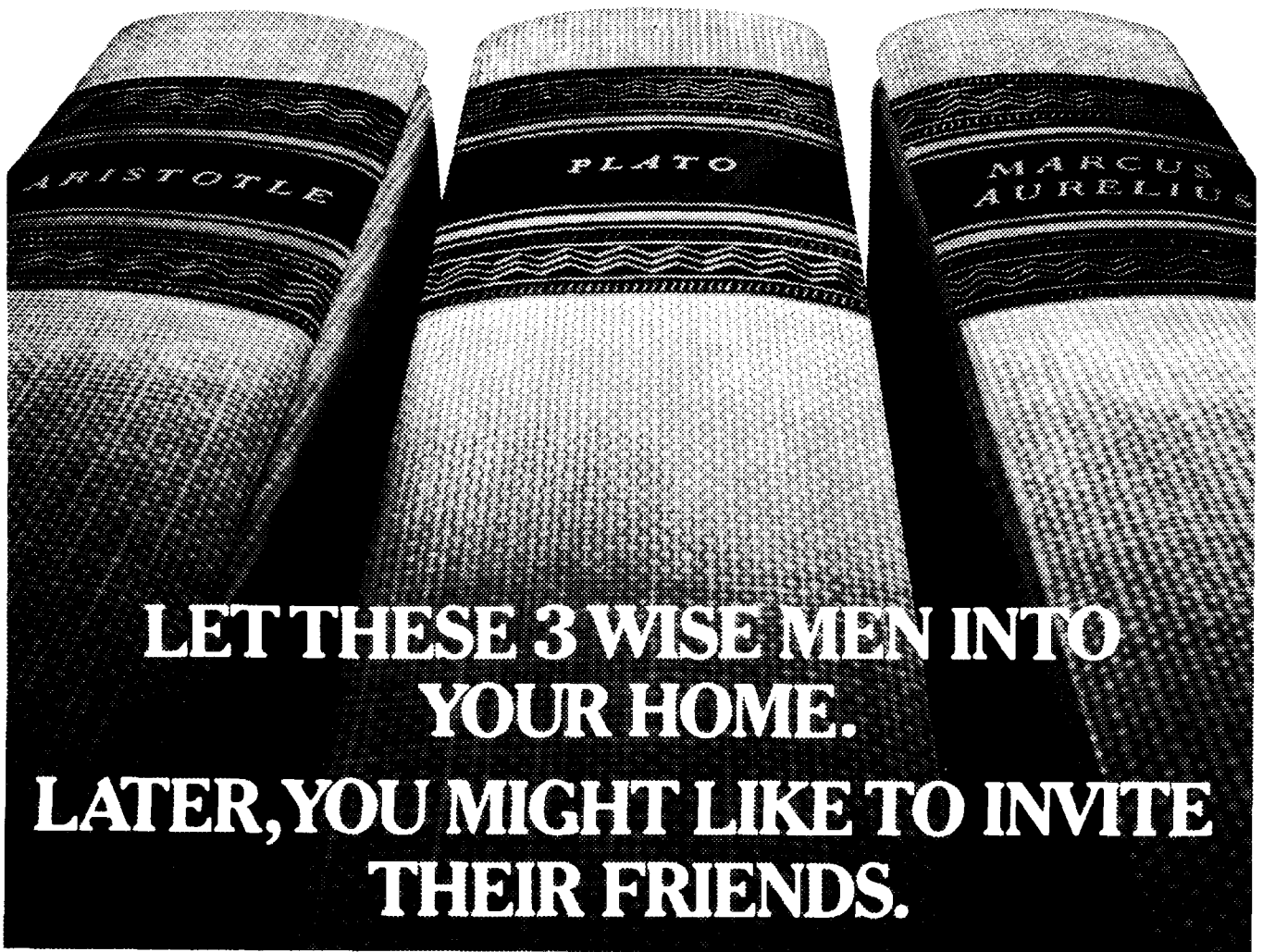

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Bush's youth service scheme.

1,000 Points Of Lite

GEORGE BUSH IS out to stop himself from ever happening again. In a recent speech in Sacramento, he proposed a catchy new acronym, YES to America, with a program stuck to it. Youth Engaged in Service to America would pair the needs of the haves with those of the have-nots. Bush explained that he is "haunted" by the plight of inner-city children and by the privilege of wealthier ones: "We've showered our children with material things and still we have a sense of unease," he said. "Do they know they're fortunate? . . . Or are they almost cut off by their affluence, removed from the cares and concerns of others?"

Bush called for $100 million in federal money, matched by private donations, to fund a "public-private partnership" that would encourage young people to serve their communities. The details are fuzzy, but the vice president apparently intends to give federal grants to proven or promising public service programs. He also suggested that high schools and colleges might offer academic credit to students who volunteer. This, apparently, is what speechwriter Peggy Noonan told Bush she had meant by "a thousand points of light," the mysterious and persistent metaphor from Bush's acceptance address in New Orleans.

So at last we know. The producers of the Bush campaign have fiddled with the knobs and collected the thousand points into a coherent image: lots of young Danforth Quayles and Bushes dispensing counsel in a battered women's shelter.

This proposal deserves more attention than it has drawn, in part because it is a refreshing admission that the administration's rhetoric of voluntarism is hollow. Pure voluntarism, as espoused by the Reagan-Bush administration, asks the private sector to fill gaps created by American capitalism and vacated by a retreating federal government; essentially, it leaves the war on poverty in the hands of vigilantes. And indeed, the vibrance of upstart programs like Campus Compact, a coalition of about 150 college and university presidents working to increase public service by their students, demonstrates that Americans are interested and effective in volunteer efforts. But, as Bush confesses in promising to spend lots of money on YES, the points of light don't shine quite so brightly when they're not plugged in to the federal treasury. This admission—that the government must play an assertive role in helping the have-nots—places Bush on traditionally Democratic turf. His dramatic unveiling of YES to America demonstrates that he doesn't know the territory.

If Bush's producers had checked a little more closely, they would have found two federal programs, the Student Community Service Project and the Office of Project Demonstration and Development, that already do what YES to America is supposed to do. Or, at least, they *would* do it if they had any money. In 1989 they'll receive a total of $4 million, about half of their allotment under the Carter administration. Bush's producers might also have stumbled across the decomposing corpse of University Year for Action, which once encouraged universities to offer credit and stipends to college students for anti-poverty work. The Reagan-Bush administration hasn't funded this program since 1982.

Bush's producers might even have unearthed the remains of Young Volunteers in Action, which, unlike the above efforts, actually grew out of the Reagan administration's voluntarism campaign. YVA expired after the General Accounting Office discovered that rather than serving in programs that addressed poverty directly, as the YVA legislation mandated, 75 percent of the volunteers surveyed were working as gardeners' helpers, candy stripers, tax-return preparers, library aides, and envelope stuffers—kind of like joining the National Guard instead of going to Vietnam.

OF COURSE, YES to America need not follow the pattern of YVA. But it probably will. According to the YES position paper, Bush "believes that the most important principle is the time given, even five hours a week." Wrong. The most important principle is the effect on poverty of the time given. It's great to enlighten the Dan Quayles of the world, but that's a byproduct. The focus of federal volunteer programs should be empowering the afflicted, not afflicting the powerful.

So what works? In his Sacramento speech, Bush called the Peace Corps a "very fine effort" but never once mentioned its domestic equivalent, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), which began under the Johnson administration. VISTA workers get an average stipend of less than $6,000 for one year, while they live in communities in which they work full-time in anti-poverty programs. They identify community needs and recruit part-time volunteers to help address them. In 1979, according to a 1983 congressional study, VISTA workers reached one out of 20 impoverished Americans; the average worker generated $24,000 in public and private sector community aid and recruited 15 volunteers.

The Reagan-Bush administration tried hard to kill VISTA. After failing in the face of strong congressional opposition, it cut VISTA's budget from $30.5 million in 1981 to $16 million in 1982. For next year, VISTA is budgeted at $21.6 million—one-fifth of what Bush has requested for YES.

Perhaps more damaging than its attack on the VISTA budget has been the administration's squeeze on national recruitment for the program. College seniors, a largely untapped source of idle hands and heady idealism, are unaware that VISTA exists; today only 14 percent of VISTA workers fall between the ages of 18 and 25. This emphasis on using only community members has turned VISTA into a jobs program and has kept it from its goal of engendering cross-class cooperation, the same sort of cooperation that YES would encourage to lesser effect.

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Across the board, the administration's rhetoric of voluntarism has replaced federal catalysts of voluntarism. Some other high points of the Reagan-Bush record: vetoing the American Conservation Corps, which would have encouraged young people to clean up the environment; fighting the creation of the VISTA Literacy Corps (and requesting zero funding for it after Congress forced it through); and requesting zero funding for a tiny program in the Department of Education that uses its $1.5 million budget to prod universities into rewarding volunteer work with financial aid.

In New Orleans, when Peggy Noonan first flashed her "thousand points of light" upon the blank screen of the vice president, they just looked like "snow"—the visual static that traditionally follows the playing of the national anthem after a late show of "Knute Rockne—All American." With YES to America, the thousand points of light have resolved themselves into an image: kids, volunteers, a "nation of communities." At last, the campaign-season viewing on our VP TV is complete: Ronald Reagan reruns, the flag, and a "kinder, gentler" nation.

YES to America may help get Bush elected, but it's unlikely to do much to gentle our nation. Without saying where the money will come from, Bush is calling for a large sum to fund a hazy, redundant federal program that may do as much to pad the résumés of pre-law students as to help the poor. During the same speech in which he trotted out YES to America, Bush lambasted "liberals" for their "bloated and unrealistic" anti-poverty programs. It's good news that Bush now recognizes that the government must spend money to fight poverty, but it would be nice to see a less bloated and more realistic approach.

JAMES BENNET

THE MONEY CULTURE

MINORITY INTEREST

ONE OF THE concessions Jesse Jackson extracted from Michael Dukakis before the Democratic convention was the insertion of "affirmative action, including . . . procurement set-asides" in the otherwise ruthlessly vague and non-controversial Democratic Party platform. Set-asides are policies that reserve a portion of government-funded projects for minority (and sometimes women) contractors. An open invitation to fraud, set-asides have been implicated in some of the most entertaining scandals of the Reagan era, most notably those involving the Wedtech Corporation.

Yet oddly, set-asides are the least controversial form of affirmative action. Even Republicans endorse them. The 1984 GOP platform, while condemning quotas and reverse discrimination, also bragged of "$2.3 billion in federal sole-source [i.e., non-competitive] contracts to minority firms . . . a 45 percent increase over 1980." The 1988 platform is more cautious, merely promising to "increase, strengthen, and reinvigorate minority business development efforts." But the Reagan administration for eight years has expressed nothing but enthusiasm for policies giving preference to minority businessmen in government contracting, while pushing hard to end affirmative action for the likes of policemen and firemen.

Even if you could curtail corruption in set-asides, they're a dubious idea. What they generally amount to—even when there is no fraud—is affirmative action for the rich. The best current example is found on Wall Street, where set-asides are flourishing. Black and Hispanic investment bankers who graduated from tony business schools and have no trouble making ends meet are getting bonanzas from taxpayers, white investment bankers, and various other people (some black or Hispanic), often in exchange for very little or no real work.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION in the underwriting business—the part of investment banking that deals with selling new issues of stock or bonds to the public—isn't new. For years some black mayors and other local politicians have steered business to minority-owned investment banking firms either through set-asides or by awarding the contracts outright. Under a set-aside, the government authority issuing securities—say $500 million in bonds to build a power plant—selects one or more investment banking firms to manage the issue under the condition that the managers include a handful of minority-owned firms in the underwriting syndicate. The syndicate is the group of investment bankers, assembled by the managing underwriters, that share the financial risk of the issue's failing, get their names on the deal, and occasionally are even given by the managers some stock or bonds to sell.

In recent years underwriting set-asides have become formalized. California now requires that at least 20 percent of its billions in bonds be sold by minority- or female-owned underwriters. This spring New York City dropped Citibank, Chase Manhattan, and Chemical Bank from the group that manages its annual bond issues totaling more than $1 billion and replaced them with firms such as W. R. Lazard and Pryor, Govan, two well-known minority-owned investment banking firms. The federal government joined the parade in 1987 when it sold Conrail, insisting that minority-owned firms get a piece of the underwriting business in the stock offering. Last fall, when the Farmers Home Administration went to market with a $2.4 billion issue, five major Wall Street firms caused a ruckus by declining to participate in the syndicate after the FmHA insisted that a dozen minority-owned and regional firms be listed above them in the "tombstone," that peculiar advertisement that announces bond or stock issues in newspaper business pages. Much importance is attached to the location of a firm in the tombstone's hierarchy; the ad is as much for the underwriters as for the bond issue.

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In fact, getting listed in the tombstone is sometimes just about all that minor underwriters do. Though the firm or firms managing the issue always play an active role in selling the securities, some firms may be included in the syndicate as a virtual formality. They do little or no actual selling, but get a piece, if a small piece, of the action. Traditionally, they've enjoyed this privilege because of a cozy relationship with the issuer or one of the issue's biggest buyers. Now having a minority as owner is another way to sneak into the tombstone without doing much work.

SO WHAT'S WRONG with tossing a little change in the direction of black MBAs for doing virtually nothing, especially when the money might otherwise go to some white MBA who does virtually nothing? One problem is that doing nothing teaches you nothing. Affirmative action is supposed to provide, in addition to money, hands-on education. But Wall Street set-asides actually deprive minorities of business experience. A black MBA at a large firm that serves as the lead underwriter for a bond issue will actually learn something about assessing and selling bonds. But once he has set up his own shop to take advantage of set-asides, he can make a decent living while learning very little. To paraphrase one banker who participated in a syndicate that included minority-owned firms: "Basically, we managers just wrote them checks, and didn't return their phone calls." If set-asides boil down to check-writing, surely there are more efficient, more equitable ways to do it.

Even in those cases where the money is being earned—and there are such cases, without doubt—it rarely goes to people who especially need it. The partners in most minority firms were making plenty of money at elite investment houses before they got into the affirmative action business. (W. R. Lazard's partners came from Salomon Brothers and Merrill Lynch, and M. R. Beal, another minority firm, was recently founded by a senior vice president of Shearson Lehman Hutton.) Rather than spreading the wealth, set-aside programs tend to deepen it, rewarding over and over the same stratum of the black community. Perhaps wealthy black investment bankers are somewhat more likely than wealthy white investment bankers to spend their pile in ways that benefit poor blacks. But that hardly justifies the bonanza.

The tacit assumption behind Wall Street set-asides is that, even if a minority-owned firm is less qualified than its competitors, no great harm will be done. After all, government securities usually have a large and ready market; there's really not much to selling them. There's some truth in that. Besides, most minority-owned firms, having been founded by senior investment bankers at major firms, do an acceptable job of selling what (little) they're given to sell, even if it is often to the clients of the other underwriters. One problem is that many of these firms have little in the way of capital resources. If an issue does fail (it happens), underwriters are on the hook for the percentage of the deal they've obligated themselves to underwrite. And if they can't come up with the cash, other underwriters in the syndicate have to pick up the slack. Similarly, if securities are sold to someone who then decides to resell quickly, or "flip" them, the underwriter needs enough capital to step in and buy them back lest the market for them crashes or at least destabilizes. A firm needs capital to buy back securities and thereby protect the issuer from abrupt declines in the critical "after-market" period. If the underwriter can't do that, the taxpayers ultimately pay the price; if a big-city bond issue goes bad, the city will have to pay higher interest next time around to overcome residual skepticism of its underwriters and investors. The cost of that burden falls on the city's taxpayers, many or most of whom are minorities and almost all of whom are poorer than investment bankers, black or white, male or female.

ONE REASON there's not much opposition to Wall Street set-asides is because of the Robin Hood principle. Any affirmative action program, to win much public support, has to channel advantages away from a group that appears truly advantaged to one that appears truly disadvantaged. Well, who seems more truly advantaged than a lily-white investment banker? But wait a minute. Who is really giving up the goods here? Cutting minority-owned firms into underwriting syndicates may reduce the fees paid to non-minority firms, but that doesn't necessarily reduce the year-end bonuses of overpaid investment bankers. Many firms are publicly owned, so some of the cost falls on shareholders, including pension funds managing the savings of little old ladies. Some Wall Street firms have hundreds of clerical employees who benefit from profit-sharing plans.

When government exempts some portion of its purchasing from competitive bidding and reserves it for minority contractors, it—meaning the taxpayers, black and white—probably has to pay more than it otherwise would. The question remains, is this the best way for the government to spend our money on minorities. On the other hand, if minority investment banks, created for no other purpose, can be cut in on government bond work without costing the government more in fees, this suggests that the real scandal is that the government is paying too much to *all* its investment bankers of all colors, which is undoubtedly the case.

Affirmative action is an attempt, begun in earnest more than two decades ago, to improve the lot of minorities, mainly blacks, in American society. That was, and is, a worthwhile goal. But affirmative action's successes—in education, business, government—have been few and modest. Set-aside programs pose, even more sharply than other sorts of quotas, fundamental questions about the means and ends of affirmative action. They reward people who shouldn't be rewarded, hurt people who shouldn't be hurt, and breed contempt not only among whites but also among blacks trying to make it in the business mainstream.

RED SUSPENDERS

Red Suspenders is a pseudonym for a white investment banker.

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The pope is an "influential ally" for progressives.

—*John Kenneth Galbraith*

That the pope in Rome, a former manual worker, is actually a political progressive and a principled critic of capitalism — so much so as to make U.S. liberals seem like neoconservatives — is one of our mass media's best kept secrets.

In *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul said that capital must serve labor and called for workers' co-ownership and co-management of the means of production. In his more recent encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he equated Western capitalism and Eastern Communism, and condemned both evenhandedly — placing the Catholic Church well to the "left" of the Democratic Party. He spoke of the Church's preferential love for the poor and characterized the security concerns of both East and West as "unacceptably exaggerated," adding that resources which should be spent on alleviating misery in the Third World are wasted on arms and imperialistic schemes.

Happily, a few sensitive souls are getting the message. On the strength of *Sollicitudo*, Norman Mailer proposed this literary pope for membership in PEN. John Kenneth Galbraith announced that "we must all applaud our greatly influential mentor, guide and ally." Murray Kempton, pointing to Church activism in the Philippines, South Korea, Poland, and Latin America, said that "even unbelievers like myself have to concede that the Catholic Church has become the steadiest, and in many places the only, defender of human rights the wide world can show."

If you'd been reading the NEW OXFORD REVIEW — an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, and written and read not only by Catholics, but by Protestants, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, and even nonbelievers — none of this would surprise you. Moreover, you'd have been reading about giants like Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Djilas, Silone, Tolstoy, and Simone Weil; about Nicaragua from eyewitnesses; about the retreat of Born-Again Chic, betrayals by neoconservatives and yuppies, the pros and cons of liberation theology, and the idolatry of nationalism; about the consistent ethic of life, simple living and economic democracy, religious opposition to nuclear weapons and U.S. belligerence in Central America, the need for a spiritually centered world view, and much more.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

One Weekend

House of Games, written and directed by David Mamet and released last year, towers above every American film I've seen since then. This, unfortunately, includes his new film, *Things Change*. The ambience of his drama is once again deceit, but this time (with Shel Silverstein as script collaborator) Mamet has done little more than contrive a tricky plot, in-

Things Change
(Columbia)

stead of letting his characters reveal themselves—to themselves, as well as to us—as they journey through that ambience. Evocation is replaced by cleverness. This doesn't have to be injurious if the cleverness is bright and tight. In *Things Change*, not so.

The film is especially disappointing because it begins like a true Mamet exploration of inner space. An aging Chicago bootblack, Sicilian-born, is asked by a Mafia capo to plead guilty to a murder charge. The murder was actually committed by a Mafioso who closely resembles the bootblack—played by Don Ameche. In return for his guilty plea and for serving (the capo promises) only three years, the bootblack will get a nice piece of change and can fulfill his dream: to return to Sicily and buy a fishing boat. The bootblack accepts the offer.

That's a premise of possibilities, with ramifications on the subject of identity. None of these, nor of any other inner avenue, is explored. The deal is made on a Friday. Ameche is to go to the police on Monday with his confession, which he signs right away. He is put in a hotel room over the weekend with a Mafia guard, played by a favorite actor of Mamet's, Joe Mantegna. The events of that weekend are the body of the film. Mantegna suddenly decides to take Ameche to Lake Tahoe for a last fling; Ameche is assumed to be a Mafia biggie at a posh hotel; he gets an invitation to a real capo's luxe home; and more. The film ends back in Chicago on Monday morning with a triple plot twist.

Twists. *House of Games* and many Mamet plays have surprises in them as they proceed, but these are the result of the pursuit of truth in ways we hadn't expected because they are so true. They aren't devices concocted by an author to jab us with mere invention. The second time that one sees *House of Games* the revelations and fresh turns are still interesting—more than the first time, in fact, because they certify the organic structure of the work. I can't think that *Things Change* would repay further viewings; it would be like reading an O. Henry story twice.

Even one viewing raises questions of credibility. Ameche has a large family. After he agrees to the bargain, he never gets in touch with any of them, if not to disclose the bargain at least to forewarn them of the results. Mantegna is on probation with the mob. He committed a blunder recently, and the mob gives him this job—guarding Ameche—in order to square himself with his chief. Would a mobster in such a fix, in a world where disobedience means termination, disregard instructions and take his charge to Lake Tahoe? Ameche's successful capo impersonation out West depends entirely on his innocent responses that are misread, something like Peter Sellers in *Being There*. This calls for unlikely stupidity on the part of his questioners. When Ameche and Mantegna run out of gas and money at a filling station, they are saved, literally, by dei ex machina—some acquaintances who drive into the station and immediately give them the sizable sum they need for their return to Chicago. The final twists in the last two sequences ask the audience to hurry across a zigzag tightrope.

It's strange to be questioning credibility in a Mamet script. Excepting some elements in his recent play *Speed-the-Plow*, I can't recall a previous worry about that matter in his work. Possibly this is because his previous writings have underlying themes and *Things Change* has none. The characters live and trade in the world of deceit, but to what end? What thematic weight do the deceptions carry? In a penetrating critique of *House of Games* in the *Threepenny Review*, Wendy Lesser explored the parallels between the psychiatrist and the con artist, along with the role of the author himself as the con man über Alles—the whole film as a dramatization of the artifices of art. No comparable fabric is woven in *Things Change*. The title is repeated several times in the course of the film, as if it in itself were resonant, and the ending is supposed to confirm that resonance; but the net effect is of a black-humor "Queen for a Day," a lowly person's voyage upward and back in a short span of time.

Especially unsettling here is Mamet's shakiness with what has usually been excellent in him, his choice and direction of actors. Ameche, though born Amici, is unconvincing as the Sicilian. I've seen this happen before with American second-generation ethnic actors trying to sound like their forebears. (Imagine James Cagney in a Barry Fitzgerald role.) From his opening line, "I just-a

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hotel Terminus. Marcel Ophuls's new work is not up to his best—too long and too unsteady in texture—but much of this documentary about Klaus Barbie is grimly fascinating. (Reviewed 10/24/88)

The Last Temptation of Christ. Now that the hubbub begins to subside, this may be seen as what it is: the sporadically moving, utterly serious screen adaptation of an atrocious novel. (9/12&19/88)

Midnight Run. If you can shut your eyes and ears in the slam-bang segments, you get a series of sharp and witty dialogues between Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin, captor and captive, as they travel cross-country. (8/29/88)

Red Sorghum. A Chinese film directed with a notable non-provincial sensibility, and well acted. The story, about a young couple weathering troubles in the late 1920s and early 1930s, strains to be epic but doesn't quite succeed. (10/17/88)

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shine shoes," Ameche's accent sounds forced, and when his hard Midwestern "r" intrudes in a word like "heart," the verity cracks further. Age hasn't helped Ameche's face. Some people become later editions of themselves, like Paul Newman; some, like Ameche, seem to lose their earlier faces completely. I was a fan of his personality performances in the 1930s and 1940s, but he never had to do much acting. Here, when depths and colors are needed, they are not forthcoming. A much better choice for the part would have been Robert Duvall (born Duvall).

Mantegna, too, is pushed out of bounds. When he plays the kind of role he had in *House of Games*, a character who is in complete control, he zooms down the track like a sleek racing car. But Mamet puts this Mafioso in situations where his control is gone, where he's farcically panicked and rushed. Mantegna can't handle it.

Mamet's visual sense is still extraordinary. The opening, for instance, is beautifully done. After the credits the screen goes to black. This black turns out to be the back of a man who walks away from the camera in a music store. The man tries out a couple of mandolins with an Italianate tune, chooses one, goes up to the counter to buy it, and the camera keeps traveling to two Mafiosi watching through the shop window for Ameche to come out of a doorway across the street. It's like a graceful dance sequence that makes us hungry for what's to come.

But directing, art that it is, is nonetheless easier than writing. (Or else we wouldn't have the worldwide imbalance—much good directing, much less good screenwriting.) Mamet the director was here hobbled by Mamet the writer, to such a degree that he was thrown off center in his casting and use of actors. The director, if only in figurative self-defense, should have asked more questions of the screenwriter's script.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

Karajan: The Nazi Recordings

The phone call, in the summer of 1982, did not come directly from Herbert von Karajan. It was made, I learned later, by his agent in New York. Its message was unambiguous. If the *New York Times*, for which I was then a music critic, did not cease its inquiries into Karajan's Nazi party associations and affiliations, Karajan's American tour with the Berlin Philharmonic would be in jeopardy, and legal action might be the result.

The occasion for this threat was my work, still in its early stages, on an essay about musicians during the Nazi period. And the occasion for my work was new research that had appeared on the subject in Germany, and various, more local events. A prominent Schumann scholar, for example, whose résumé included the confiscation of Jewish-owned instruments and the rewriting of musical history for the Nazi Reichsmusikkammer—the governing body of Nazi musical life—had been invited to speak at a conference in the United States. A debate had begun over the treatment of the Nazi backgrounds of musicians in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. And opinions were again in the air to the effect that the musical past had indeed passed, that music belonged to purer realms than politics; bringing up Nazi affiliations smacked, as one scholar put it to me, of "McCarthyism."

But the new German research had established just such "McCarthyite" facts: for example, that Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, the distinguished soprano who had long denied any unsavory associations during the war years, joined the Nazi party in 1940. A journalist named Frederick K. Prieberg was receiving wide acclaim in Germany for his book *Musik im N.S.-Staat* (Music in the National Socialist State, still untranslated). Aside from providing detailed information about the organized Nazi control of musical life, Prieberg's book was full of damning anecdotes, notably an account of Karl Böhm offering the Hitler salute at his concerts and praising the powers of the Führer.

Also in Prieberg's book were facts about Herbert von Karajan. Over the years Karajan has given varied accounts of his Nazi affiliations. He never denied them outright, because just after the war the evidence was overwhelming; but he asserted that he joined the party purely for careerist reasons, and certainly not earlier than 1935. But Prieberg (repeating research that Paul Moor had done in 1957, which had been conveniently forgotten by musical authorities) obtained copies of Karajan's Nazi membership documents. At the age of 25, the young conductor joined the party in his hometown of Salzburg, on April 8, 1933, to be precise; his membership number was 1-607-525. He also joined a second time in Ulm, Germany, less than a month later, and became No. 3-430-914. He had been appointed music director in Ulm, it is true, but party membership was by no means required or expected. In any event, the first membership in Austria surely owed more to conviction than to expedience.

Prieberg's book, then, had pretty much put the facts on the record. They had even caused a fuss in Germany, where they were taken still further. A report in *Der Spiegel* noted that in Nazi celebrations held in Aachen in 1935, Karajan conducted a 750-member chorus and 100-member orchestra in a song cycle, "Celebration of the New Front," with text by Baldur von Schirach, later the head of the Hitler Youth Movement. The titles of the songs included "Hitler," "The Guardians of the Future," and "Horst Wessel." After the Anschluss, moreover, Karajan celebrated the future of Austria with a special performance of *Fidelio*.

All this documentation notwithstanding, Karajan treated my own inquiries as if reporting the very fact of his party membership would libel him; hence the threat from his minion. His denials were not unusual. Schwarzkopf, in a phone interview from Switzerland, told me indulgently and too good-humoredly that she thought the German reports about her Nazi past were "ridiculous." She denied having ever been a member of the party. She also denied that any of the other more colorful rumors about her activities during the Nazi era, which have long circulated in the music world, were true.

My editors at the *Times* made a decision: since Karajan was making threats and Schwarzkopf was refusing to sing, the confirmation of the German reports was best carried out by the paper's correspondent on the scene, John Tagliabue, who published his account in the *Times* months later, on March 17, 1983. I followed with an essay, but by then Karajan's U.S. tour had long since passed, of course, and no lawsuit loomed. And

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Schwarzkopf could only humbly excuse her party affiliation by pompously intoning, after Tosca, "*Vissi d'arte*": I lived for art.

But at least Schwarzkopf (and a few others), when cornered with facts, acknowledged them to be facts. Karajan remained adamant that he joined the Nazi party later than these documents proved, and only for career reasons; and he has never been swayed by the incontrovertible evidence to the contrary. Later he actually told his biographer, Roger Vaughan, that Prieberg "said those things just to make money." When Vaughan presented him with copies of the party registration forms, Karajan simply denied their validity.

What, musically, is to be made of this? Is there a connection between Karajan's Nazism and Karajan's art? The question is raised again by the recent release of six CDs by Deutsche Grammophon Gessellschaft (423 525-2), called *Herbert von Karajan—The First Recordings*. These are recordings Karajan made in Berlin and occupied Amsterdam and allied Turin between 1938 and 1943. They might be more correctly called "Karajan—The Nazi Recordings." The program notes are scurrilously uninformative; they never mention the political setting, or even the logistics, of these performances.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

These were performances that served culture as Goebbels conceived it, as "a poster for the Third Reich." They occurred when Karajan may have been a member of the Sicherheitsdienst (the Security Service prosecuted at the Nuremberg trials)—an assertion that was never proved by the Allied Denazification Commission. They may even have been listened to, with mixed reviews, by Hitler himself (who once stormed out of a Karajan performance of *Meistersinger*, complaining about one of the singers).

Even without the sordid political twist, however, these recordings would be of historical interest. For here is the record of the performances that helped make Karajan, while still in his early 30s, one of the most important musical figures in Germany, that helped establish him as the chief rival of Wilhelm Furtwängler—a rivalry that was exploited by the Nazis, in part to weaken Furtwängler, whose less than enthusiastic advocacy of the party was a problem. These recordings are the prelude to the most visible and powerful conducting career in modern times.

They began to make sense to me when I recalled the first time—the only time—I saw Karajan conduct. It was during that tour of the Berlin Philharmonic in 1982, the tour he had threatened to cancel. His recordings were familiar to me, of course, though I knew only a fraction of the over 800 he has made. It would have been impossible, in fact, not to have known Karajan's approach and style. Over 100 million copies of his records have been sold. There must be no other figure (besides Leonard Bernstein, for Americans) who has so completely dominated orchestral musical life since the war—this, despite the fact that the vast majority of his appearances during the past three decades have occurred in a tight geographical (and cultural) triangle outlined by Berlin and Salzburg and Vienna.

But I was totally unprepared for the concert. Mahler's Ninth Symphony, one of the repertoire's most gargantuan and indulgent excavations of the self, was transformed into a subtly shaped crystalline object. Karajan's dictatorial stance—his demand for total control and submission, whether staging an opera or conducting a Strauss waltz—is well known, but the objectivity of the performance I attended actually seemed self-effacing. Yet it was also so characteristically individual, so unique, that its personal character could not be missed. It was, paradoxically, both objective and idiosyncratic, with Mahler's musical confession becoming Karajan's detached analysis. He did not ramble through the grotesque *Ländler* of the second movement, or whirl through the clipped madness of the third, but proceeded as if hovering above them, half in observation, half in distraught sympathy. It was a feat of aerial poise.

I was taken aback, and not just by the interpretation. The Berlin sound was translucent, ethereal, the balances so finely tuned, the lines never seemed to separate but were also never lost. It was clear from the first measures that Karajan was producing a unique sound from the Berlin Philharmonic, bred through more than three decades of association—an association that is often referred to as a marriage, and has been fraught, like all marriages, with conflicts and tensions. (The Berlin Philharmonic is actually the godparent of Karajan's daughter.) There are few American orchestras that have enjoyed such a connection: the Cleveland under Szell, perhaps, or the Philadelphia under Ormandy. But even in those cases, there was, I think, a less complete interpenetration of personality and intellect. In

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the case of this conductor and this orchestra, however, there could be no distinction. It is a habit of critical listeners to focus on various "sections" of an orchestra, on the brass or the woodwinds, on the strings or the percussion. In this instance, the attempt would have been distracting; a single instrument was being played, and Karajan was its master.

That must be the sound intended for Karajan's recordings, too; but I have never heard it with the body and the sheen felt in Carnegie Hall. Even the remarkable live performance of Mahler's Ninth (Deutsche Grammophon, 410 726-2) made that same year is but a shadow of the one heard that night. Despite the fact that Karajan's music-making is widely known through recordings and video, both those forms of reproduction have filtered out some essential aspect of Karajan's genius—the sound and the presence.

IT WAS EERIE, for example, to see Karajan conduct. Karajan is a small man. His back was stiff, his legs were immobile (he has long had health problems that would have crippled other conductors); his body irrelevant, it would seem, to his project. Moreover, Karajan leads with his eyes closed: the score is always committed to memory. Conducting without eye contact means controlling the space rather than thinking of the players, knowing how with hands alone to articulate a particular phrase, signaling with minimal movement. Bernstein is the ecstatic wild dancer. Karajan's ecstasy seems entirely contained in the shapes created by his hands. It was as if the hands created a physical model, a tactile translation of the composition. The result was a sort of musical musculature as clear and precise as the shape of the conductor's gestures. It was a shape, though, that had nothing whatever to do with the body, and probably never does. Karajan's conducting did not inspire dancing or laughing, or bouncing, or sobbing. The hands and the music seemed suspended in space, as if on display in a sculptor's studio.

The music, then, was both physical and disembodied, corporeal but untethered. The performance was hardly a performance, in the sense that it seemed inconsequential whether or not the audience was there (which is probably why Karajan is the master of the recording market). There are conductors whose power comes from the intensity of their struggle: from the listener's sense that

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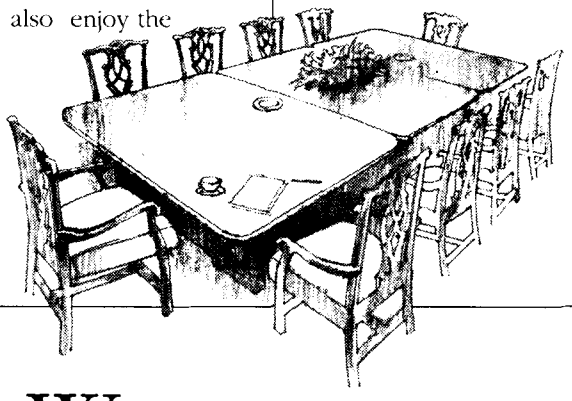

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musical phrases are being pulled from each other, with strength coming from a brooding intelligence. With Karajan, there is no struggle. Or, the struggle is already over by the time the music is heard. There is simply the presentation of the music by a man claiming the authority of absolute power.

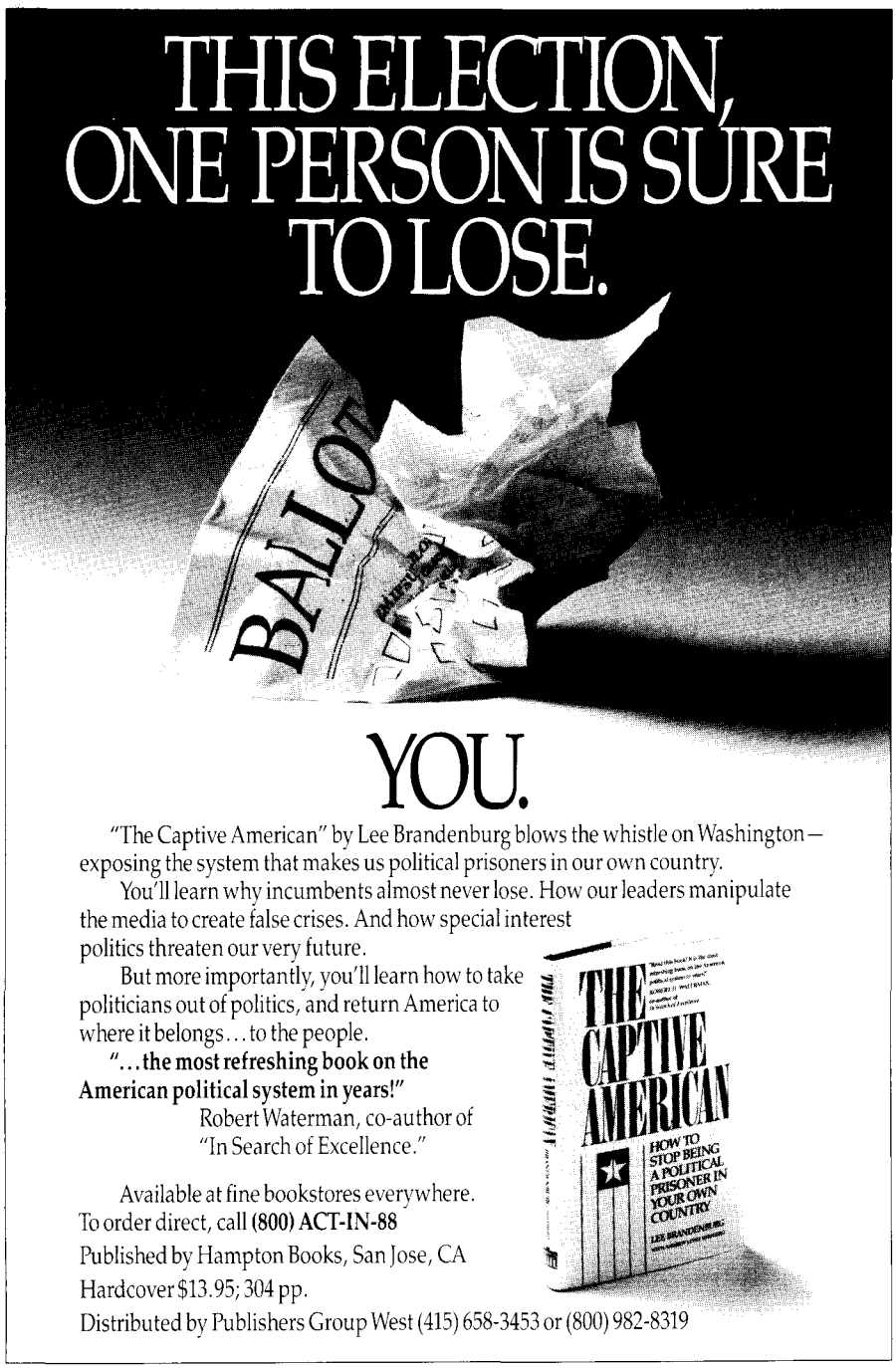
For that is what emerges: a power so complete that there is no need to tether it, to limit it, to ground it. The will is all-encompassing. All conductors, to a certain extent, possess variations of such power. (They must.) But in no other conductor I have seen is the control itself so evident within the sound and substance of the music itself. It is almost impossible to listen to Karajan without being aware of his will. And in no other conductor has the power been so detached from passion or the audience, and therefore so evident.

Karajan's style as a conductor honors the aesthetic proclaimed by Nietzsche, who scorned the notion of dramatic music, asserting that "feeling" and "passion" are mere "surrogates when one no longer knows how to achieve an exalted spirituality and the happiness that attends it.... Technically 'feeling' and 'passion' are easier—they presuppose much poorer artists." Karajan is after precisely that kind of spirituality. He told his biographer of his devotion to Zen, and speaks of the orchestra in the same way: "I don't hear the music anymore—I just live it. It absorbs me. Every concert is a mystical experience, an ecstasy. You step out of yourself, or what you think is yourself." This detachment for the purpose of absorption seems the source of Karajan's power.

IT MIGHT BE thought that precisely this power was what accounted for Karajan's meteoric success in Nazi Germany. His demand for total control, along with his "objectivity," his detachment completely untempered by sentiment (or, some say, loyalty), gave him a stunning ability to lead organizations. When Furtwängler died, Karajan demanded that the Berlin Philharmonic appoint him artistic director for life. He was willing to work for 12 years without a contract until he got what he wanted; and by the late 1950s, with the shadows of the Nazi affiliation behind him (or so he thought), Karajan was artistic director of the Vienna State Opera, artistic director of the Salzburg Festival, artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic, chief conductor of the London Philharmonia, and a regular at La Scala: he was jokingly called the *General musikdirektor* of Europe.

But one gets a very different impression from the "Nazi" recordings. They resemble little I've heard from Karajan; even the recordings made just after the war (with Walter Legge as producer) seem created by a different man. In these early recordings, the detachment seems minimal, the power qualified. There is immediacy; less will, more willfulness. The performances almost seem the work of a different conductor. Some of this, no doubt, is due to youth; and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, or the Staatskapelle Berlin, or even the Berlin Philharmonic of those years, hardly had the relationship with Karajan he was later to develop with the Philharmonic. So edges are smeared at times and balances are not precise, though this "ruggedness" in some of the playing can translate into vividness and energy.

Still, I think the differences are more profound, more a matter of temperament and spirit. Consider the opening bars of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, recorded in 1941 with the Staatskapelle Berlin. Later Karajan recordings treat the chordal strokes of the opening phrases with surgical precision. The chords serve more as thematic ele-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ments than dramatic ones, as sharp gestures that have their contrasting counterparts in delicate scalar figures a few measures later. But in the 1941 recording, the integration seems less important than the effect of suspense, which casts a shadow across the movement's introduction. Similarly, while Karajan's later performances of Richard Strauss are premeditated excursions into sound and gesture, the recordings of Don Juan and the Dance of the Seven Veils from *Salome* (made with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam in 1943) can even sound sentimental or viscerally distraught: dramatically played through and through.

It is precisely the dramatic element that is strongest in these early performances of Dvořák's "New World Symphony" and Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" as well—not texture or structure or color, but tension, contrast, and release. Not surprisingly, the performances in this early style that fail totally are the Mozart symphonies, recorded in 1942 with the Orchestra Sinfonica della Rai di Torino: this music cannot sustain the conductor's determined accents and stringent pressure. Ambition and drive seem to determine these performances' character. It is not difficult to hear why this style of conducting would find a sympathetic response in Germany at the time.

I DO NOT mean, of course, that these performances are "Nazi" in some politically or ideologically specific way, that they suggest some Germanic fascist universe in their phrasing and their pulse. The damning facts of Karajan's involvement with the party are plain, but the ways in which such facts influence an art as abstract as music are by no means simple. We can even ignore the facts and admire the music. That is what we do, for example, with Walter Gieseking's haunting Mozart performances, pretending that this crystalline delicacy and penetrating insight belongs to a realm unsullied by Nazi alliances. We might also feel the same about the rarefied music of Webern, whose nonmusical writings are riddled with earthy enthusiasm for Hitler. Indeed, it is an old and perfectly defensible habit of our culture to treat great composers and performers as if they were otherworldly beings in a pantheon of gods.

But we are missing something of the music when we do this. If music is treated as if it had no grounding in the concrete world of persons and politics, if it is treated as purely a formal construction, music risks becoming a novel without characters, using words without meaning. Education becomes focused on execution and analysis. Listening becomes focused on mere pleasure or cultish devotion. This is one reason why so much music has become relatively unimportant today, despite its plenitude: we have filtered out the aspects of music that connect it to creator and culture on any level deeper than "music appreciation." So we hear Mozart's music not as an intricate commentary on the relationship between manners and natural passion so important to his time, but as, simply, "great," "magical," "sublime," "holy." And we listen to Gieseking, believing firmly that there is no difference between his Mozart and ours.

This worshipful thinning of music may have saved it, ironically, from the reductionist extreme evident in much university discussion of other arts today, in which politics and patronage become the most important aspects of the aesthetic enterprise. Music will suffer no such constraints. Because of its abstract structure and internal relations, music is rarely literal about its origins or its meanings. A sonata from the early 19th century is not "about" its society in the way a novel

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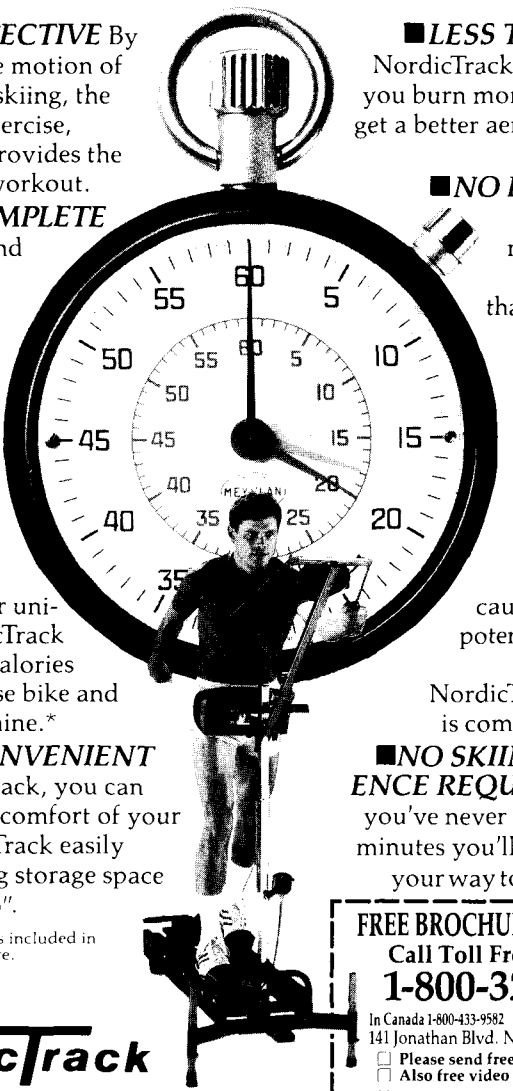

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might be. It is too indeterminate. But that is not the end of the matter. There are still limitations on music's possible meanings. A classical sonata has a certain shape and style because of the way in which its creator thought and the type of music he was expected to write. Music's abstraction gives it multiple possibilities for interpretation, but these are not random possibilities. What we would find in the Nazi period may not be "fascist" music, but music consistent with the party's approach to the world.

WHAT WOULD such consistency involve? A composition or a performance, first of all, involves a certain attitude to the musical material, a determination to use the musical vocabulary in a certain way; it involves, in other words, an attitude to the musical tradition. A composer or a performer may indeed be asserting something political in this attitude. An extreme example might be the works of 1960s avant-garde that deliberately and provocatively plundered phrases from the Western musical tradition for political ends, as Berio did in his much performed "Sinfonia." More subtle examples might include Bach's deliberate archaisms in his late music, or Haydn's use of gypsy and folk musics in the music written for the court. But this is not just an internal, formal matter; it also involves a choice of an audience, and an attitude to that audience. Is the audience one's colleagues, the bourgeoisie, royalty, one's race? Is the music hostile, or ironic, or condescending, or respectful toward its chosen listeners?

In his Nazi years, Karajan seemed to take an attitude toward the performing tradition that was close to Toscanini's, whom he admired (and once bicycled 200 miles to hear). It is a distinctly modern attitude, involving, supposedly, a humble submission to the composer's text, and the rejection of all attempts to play to an audience. This enshrinement of the text (true more in assertion than in practice) meant that Karajan would keep tempos steady, follow dynamic markings, refrain from indulgence in sentimentality: play it "straight." And it meant, ironically, for Karajan and for Toscanini, also that the personality of the interpreter would be all the more salient. The work would be considered apart from its audience and apart from a performing tradition: it would be hewn to shape, in other words, by an act of will.

Karajan's "drama" in the early performances is often Toscaninian. The difference is that the drive was accompanied, in Toscanini's case, by a sort of musical populism and flexibility. He was there to bring everybody along with him. His was a more "public" music-making. Karajan's seems, in these recordings, to be more focused on himself: a musical soul full of unfulfilled ambitions and overflowing with demands. It may have been just that quality that made Karajan so successful in Germany. For Nazism was less a celebration of a "public" or a "citizenry" than a gargantuan inflation of the self: the Aryan nation as isolated ego. In all the other arts, the Nazis had continually to resort to kitsch to represent their unbridled desire. In music, with all its abstract possibility, it was just the opposite. There was plenty of musical kitsch, of course, produced by party hacks, and by composers like Orff. But the primary representations of Nazi music were not at all kitsch, but the great music of the German Romantic tradition—from Beethoven to Wagner—music of desire, individual will, and destiny, turned modern and efficient and demanding, in the manner of Karajan.

AFTER THE WAR, cleaned and tempered, stripped of self-conscious drama, and turning even more objective, Karajan's style overcame the subjective, introspective remnants of Furtwängler's style, and became the modern model. He influenced not only conductors (such as Seiji Ozawa), but also singers and soloists, boosting careers through his carefully chosen affirmations, helping to create a sort of technocracy of modern music. In this technocracy the text is fetishized, but not as it is in the contemporary movement of "authenticity." The authority of the text, instead, is conferred upon, shared by, the authority of its presenter. The conductor takes on the aura of the composer.

What led to the sense of withdrawal, to the new power, sometimes sterile, sometimes eerie, sometimes haunting, that Karajan can exert? Our only hint is in the long gap in Karajan's career, between 1943, when the last of these recordings were made, and the late 1940s, when a refashioned conductor began his appearances.

For Karajan's relationship with the Nazis, it turns out, was not unambiguous. He had the support of Göring, in part because of a contract with the Berlin State Opera, but he was opposed by Goebbels, who promoted Furtwängler even to the Führer. Moreover, Karajan's position changed in October 1942, when he married Anita Gütermann, who was a quarter Jewish. What happened then is unclear, as Vaughan shows in his excellent biography. Karajan prefers silence to what he calls "awkward facts." A friend quotes him as saying, "I have done terrible things," while citing what might be called the Schwarzkopf excuse.

Those "terrible things" may have happened in Germany or outside it, during Karajan's fall from Nazi grace or afterward. During the heavy bombardment of Berlin in 1944, Karajan fled to Milan with his wife, where he was at risk from both the Germans and the partisans. One of his protectors, an architect named Aldo Pozzi, may or may not have been killed for harboring the Karajans—

A LETTER

W: (double you). A sound, a gutturally modified
Bilabial voiced spirant. ("Spirant": Fricative.
"Fricative": the forcing breath through constricted . . .)
Woman: sing. *wifman*. sing. *wim(m)on; wyman*.
Sing "a form peculiar to English," after *wife*.
Wife: the ancient word (not the pseudo-etymologic
Woe). sing. *wip*. sing. *viv*. Not Gothic,
But queer how "obscure the origins," from *wife* to

Queen! *Quene* occasionally found in ME.,
And not an ordinary *wife*; only
"The wife of a king or (in poetry)
A famous person." Who (in poetry)
Is famous? You, if doubled love speaks to you.
A written arousal made in ME. to double you.

JUDITH HALL

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it is not a fact Karajan has been consistent about. But Vaughan reports that Karajan finally "took to the hills outside Milan, near Lake Como, where for six months he and Anita lived a hand-to-mouth existence." "I was warned that I should report in every day to be transported back to Germany," he told Vaughan. "I knew it could be my death. I said constantly to myself, what will happen now? I decided if I could come through with my health intact I would not mind anything I did until things were normal. . . . So all the unpleasantness ran off me as rain runs off the roof."

The roof, it turns out, was an enduring one. It is difficult not to see the later years of the war, and the early years after the war, as fundamental to the construction of a new musical persona. Detachment was added to drive; a new, disembodied spirituality was sought that allows neither remorse nor commitment, only contemplation. Karajan may indeed have redesigned himself to Nietzschean specifications. He disdains physical unattractiveness of any kind, he flirts with death, and asserts his mastery of it. He believes he might even return to earth in his next life as a falcon. Meanwhile, in this one, he imitates that bird in manner and threat, flying planes, racing cars, skiing world-class slopes. But as his colleagues note, he indulges in what is most physical only to prove himself above it; the intoxication is in his control. "The boat vibrated with power, force," he told Vaughan of a racing boat and crew he had acquired. "I couldn't sleep all night thinking about it." It is that cold thrill that can come across in Karajan's best performances: the thrill of power put into sound.

HERSTORY

Mrs. Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era by Peter Jenkins

(Harvard University Press, 417 pp., $25)

The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism by Andrew Gamble

(Duke University Press, 263 pp., $40)

Thatcher by Kenneth Harris

(Little, Brown, 288 pp., $19.95)

No political commentator—certainly not Peter Jenkins, Kenneth Harris, or Andrew Gamble—has failed to fall under the spell of Margaret Thatcher. Her dominance of the British political scene is complete. To be sure, it is still conceivable to think of politics without her, and much of her political program is dug in deeply enough to survive under another leader. But while she remains fit, while no large recession affects the economy (and even if it does), while her government remains free of great scandal, it is very hard to see Thatcher challenged on the ground of leadership that she has made her own.

This political success has been partly a feat of personality. Thatcher has been bestowed, especially in the United States, with characteristics that lend themselves to the stereotypes already formed of the British. There is Thatcher as Elizabeth I (much to the reported irritation of Elizabeth II) surrounded by courtier ministers; Thatcher as Disraeli, ejecting the invader from her South Atlantic imperial possession; Thatcher, most recently, as Churchill, growling at the Continental Europeans that Britain's destiny is too great for incorporation into theirs, that it still acts as a bridge across the troubled waters of the North Atlantic.

Other stereotypes, however, are of her own careful making. Thatcher has used her Englishness as skillfully as her great friend Ronald Reagan has used his Americanness. Unusual for a British political leader, she has given prominence to her humble origins. She has made much of the fact that she was born (as Reagan was) above the store, as a way of strengthening her position as a Disestablisher of an Establishment to which, by intelligence (high), education (Oxford), and marriage (rich), she had easy access.

Her ideological goals were determined early and are a clear source of strength. But beneath them there is a core of personal history. As Jenkins tells us, in one of his fine pen portraits, Thatcher learned her instinctive dislike of the state and her attachment to sound money from the high-minded, liberally inclined conservative, Methodist small-shop keeper who was her adored father. She shed tears while recalling him on television last year. (In spite of every warning to the contrary, I continue to believe that at least part of that excitation of the tear ducts was involuntary.) A crucial decade or more younger than her predecessors as prime minister, all of whom had strong memories of the depression of the '30s, "her formative memories were not of the dole queue but of the queue outside the butcher's [of the late 1940s], not of the means test but of the ration book. Her crucial political experiences were gained under socialism at home and communism abroad; she was a daughter of the age of austerity, a child of the cold war."

Some of Thatcher's success, as a statesman, as a "personality," as a politician, has also turned on her evident straightforwardness: on the identity of her personality with her politics, on the close relationship between her mind and her mouth. She thinks what she feels and says what she thinks; and she has been able, in the near decade of her rule, to translate what she has said into what the nation does. Kenneth Harris notes:

> One of the reasons for the standing Mrs. Thatcher has acquired today is that whereas successive premiers since [Clement] Attlee [Labour prime minister, 1945-51] seemed to their electors to renege on many of the promises they made when they were in opposition, Mrs. Thatcher has striven to do what she said she would do, and with very considerable success. . . . Unlike the Conservative government which preceded hers [Edward Heath's] she has made no U-turns.

The evidence supports Jenkins's claim

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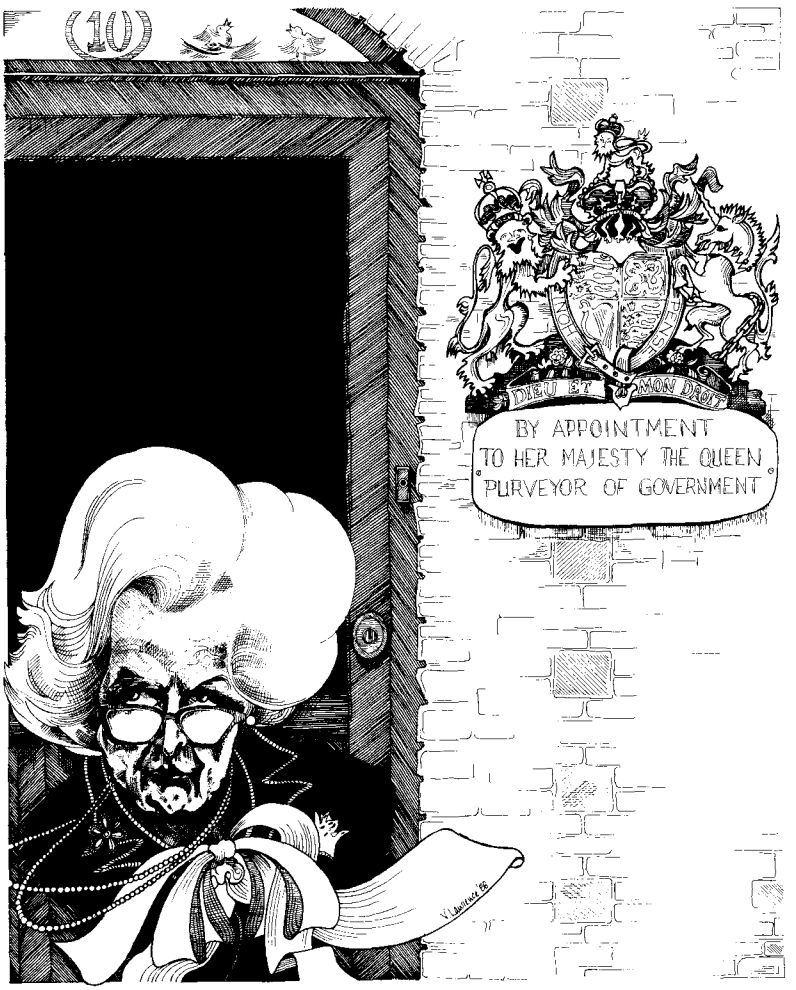
that Thatcher's instincts were more important than the ideological debate that unconservatively convulsed her in the '70s. But that does not mean (nor does he mean it to mean) that neoconservative ideology—with its think tanks and policy groups—has not played a hugely important role in the United Kingdom, as it has in the United States. In Britain the appearance and vitality of this ideology gave a huge jolt to academics, commentators, and policy-makers, who had come to assume that no serious intellectual and political contribution could be made outside of a social democratic, Keynesian framework. It inserted itself into the elites' discourse at a time—in the mid-1970s—when Labour's corporatism first stumbled over such crucial reforms as industrial democracy, then fell over the public sector and other strikes in 1978-79.

It was, of course, an ideology that underwent many changes when it was put into practice. Gamble is best on this, following Peter Riddell's unsurpassed economic analysis in *The Thatcher Government* (1985). Strict control of the money supply, begun reluctantly by a *Labour* government in 1976, was raised in 1979 (the first year of Thatcher's administration) to the level of a quasi-moral principle. It was subsequently to be superseded by policies aimed much more at the supply side, especially at the freeing up of labor markets through suppression of trade union power. The free market policies have long remained in tension, as in Reaganism, with the social conservatism. An accent on patriotism, on the family, and on the pernicious legacy of the libidinous '60s has at times seemed to define the populist basis of Thatcherism. But Thatcher lacked a constituency as powerful as the Moral Majority. Also, she was less than an absolutist in these matters: she has voted for a restoration of the death penalty, but she supports the right to abortion. Her rhetoric often seems a way of addressing a constituency that knows that its small-town morality will not run in urban, or even post-urban, society.

Her success, then, is partly that of an opportunist with gut instincts, and with guts. But it has been owed also to the gaping failure of the British left to oppose her. This failure of opposition, the strange coma of English socialism, is the other half of the story of Thatcher's political apotheosis.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

All of these writers are, or have been, leftists of various kinds: Gamble (a Marxist) and Jenkins (a social democrat) in particular are closely concerned with the left's failure. Gamble is much less categorical about it than Jenkins, merely quoting with apparent approval the present dominant strand of "revisionist" theory, according to which Thatcherism has become a "hegemonic force" over society that Labour cannot challenge because it has no coherent reform program to set against the Conservatives. Jenkins is much more forthright: among the best of the many journalists who were influential in forming the Social Democratic Party when it split from Labour in 1980, he has subtitled his book *The Ending of the Socialist Era*. And the phrase appears without the escape hatch of a question mark.

Jenkins's claim is the great lacuna in an otherwise fine, shrewd, and elegant narrative on the Thatcher years; for having made it, he does not substantiate it. He writes:

> The Socialist Age was coming to an end. What was happening in Britain was part of a worldwide phenomenon: everywhere in the industrialized democratic world the old manual working class was in decline, trade union membership was falling, old class loyalties were crumbling . . . socialism . . . would live on as a dying creed, perhaps, the priesthood remaining as the congregation departed.

Now, it is terribly important to grapple with this, for it is the largest claim made by the Thatcherites themselves. Its endorsement by a commentator as good as Jenkins gives it extrapartisan weight. On the face of it, the case that we are living through the extended ending of the socialist era in world politics is quite a strong one. Certainly it seems proved by a cursory tour of the political horizon. Socialism has (in Jenkins's phrase) "bypassed" North America. Where it exists in South America, it is embattled and unsuccessful compared with a market economy like Brazil. African socialism, even in its communist forms (as in Mozambique), is evolving in the direction of the market, and lacks a powerful and successful model. India, more a corporate state than a socialist one, is gradually dismantling, under Rajiv Gandhi, the statist controls on industry and commerce, and opening up to the international economy. The "Pacific Rim" countries presently lead the world in the dynamism of their growth and their powers of innovation: in all of them, the state, often strong to the point of tyranny, is an essential partner in their development, but private capital

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is still in the driver's seat. "Down under," the Labour parties of Australia and New Zealand have substantially liberalized two rather protected economies, unleashing a wave of hungry Australian capitalists, especially publishing tycoons, on a trembling West.

Meanwhile all of the communist states are seeking to widen the scope of the market. The Soviet Union, the motherland of the communist variant of socialism, is now struggling to retain a theoretical legitimacy for a state ideology it can no longer export; its leaders pluck at Leninist tags to screen reforms whose only meaning would lie in a restoration of just those market relations that it was the Bolshevik mission to expunge. In Eastern Europe, its satellite countries, increasingly stricken with ethnic and political tensions, and with the same economic sclerosis that afflicts the motherland, yearn westward.

With one exception, the Western European states have retained some version of social democracy, or at least of corporatism. The one exception is Britain, which is presently the most dynamic (if presently overheated) economy in Europe; the U.K. growth rate over the past five years has averaged 2.21 percent compared with West Germany's two percent and France's 1.6 percent. Some of its economic innovations—its manner of privatizing its state-owned assets, for example—have been copied by its European partners, and beyond. Further, the socialist governments of France and Spain and the former socialist, Craxi-led coalition in Italy all dropped most of the reference points of socialist practice, or never attempted to put them into place. Their socialism is confined to a certain progressivism in social and foreign affairs, and to a greater accent on programs to combat unemployment than the right has shown.

BUT THIS is not the end of the matter. It is more like the beginning. These evident trends may be closing the book on socialism, or they may be closing only a chapter. Is socialism dead? Jenkins answers in the affirmative. But there is another question to which its present condition gives rise: Is socialism changing into something different, which can and should carry the name of socialism? Remember that conservatism was itself once confidently pronounced dead, or hollowed out by social democracy. The very vigor of conservatism should give pause to any attempt to wipe socialism off the map when so many parties, governments, and activists have an interest in reviving it in different forms.

The industrial proletariat, the class whose shoulder Marx had tapped to lead the world to socialism, *has* declined and splintered in advanced economies. But there has never been a good reason why a new brand of socialism that appealed to postindustrial individualism ("what can collective action and provision do for *you*?") should not appeal to that class's

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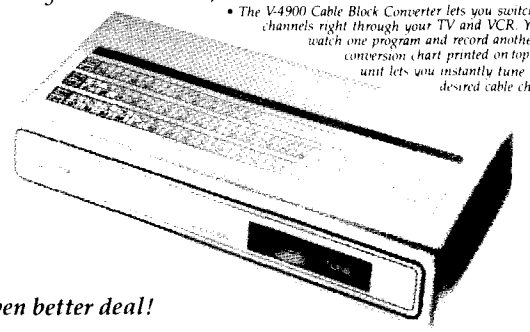

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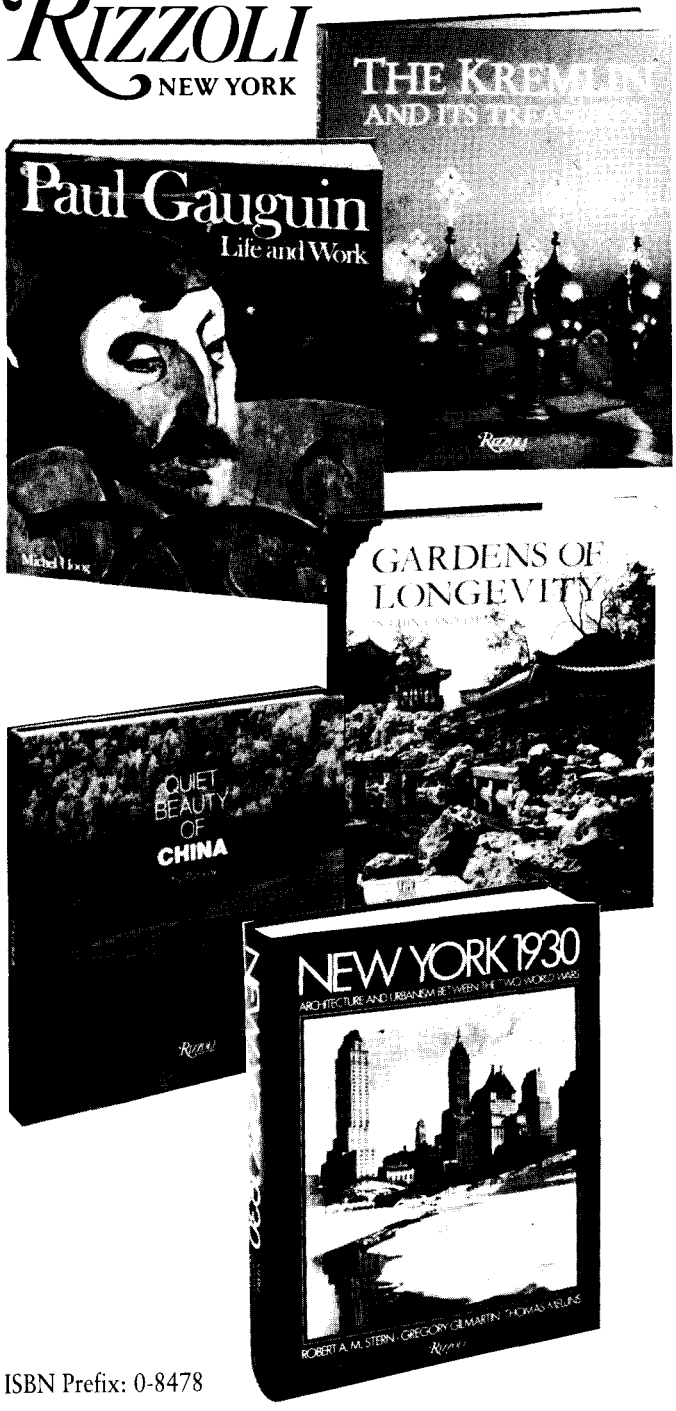

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sons and daughters, whatever they do, at least as much as an older version ("you are part of a collective and thus your allegiance is to socialism") appealed to their parents.

Still, there is no doubt that one of Thatcher's largest achievements, in her own eyes, will have been the toppling of the left, or of its agenda, from its postwar pre-eminence. She has split the left: into the shrunken (but still powerful) Labour Party; the Democrats (part of the old Labour Party that passed through the Social Democratic Party to merge with the old Liberal Party earlier this year); and the Social Democratic Party (the remaining rump of the social democrats, formed in 1981 by the right-wing Labour members). More important, she has also succeeded in partially distancing the Labour Party from the unions that created it, which now act as an albatross about it.

But this, too, is not the end of the matter. Ironically, by finally wrenching Labour from the unions, she may have left the party fit to attempt again the exercise, proposed by Hugh Gaitskell in the '50s and early '60s, of becoming a full-fledged social democratic party itself. It is now in the throes of such an exercise, which may yet allow it to command the post-Thatcher ground for which leaders and troops are already being prepared. The Labour Party conference, held in the first week of October, saw Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, lay out a program that brings labor into line with the revisionism of other European left parties: support for a mixed economy, enthusiastic backing for the European community, and a clear, if as yet still unexecuted, intention to move away from unilateralist action on nuclear weapons. If so, it will be a Thatcherized party, much as the post-Attlee conservatives (Kenneth Harris, Attlee's biographer, makes this point) became a socialized party after 1951.

WHAT ELSE can be claimed for Thatcher? Some success, certainly, in reversing what had seemed a chronic decline. In opening Britain up fully to world competition, she presided over, first, a precipitous fall in employment and in manufacturing output; the second phase saw the surviving sectors generally flourish and grow more productive; and the last phase saw Britain's economy mesh itself into the international economy perhaps more closely than any other Western state. It was already more thoroughly penetrated by American capital

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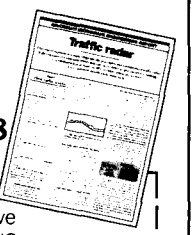

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than others. It is now welcoming the Japanese who, besides making cars, televisions, chips, construction equipment, and ball bearings, have also imported a new style of industrial relations that is having profound and divisive consequences in the trade union movement. Foreign investment in the U.K. has gone up from under $5.1 billion in 1979 to over $10.2 billion in 1985; at the same time, manufacturing exports have grown from 17.7 percent of GNP to just over 19 percent of GNP between 1979 and 1987.

THIS MOST English of prime ministers is, then, also the most internationalist-capitalist. But her immersion of a relatively weak economy in the ice pool of the world has given some parts of it terminal seizures. Given that the left had no better idea, Gamble judges that such treatment was inevitable: "A market-oriented program which allows a period of maximum freedom and experiment may prove better adapted to the new conditions of accumulation than more interventionist programs." But he doubts, as I do, whether the British model of a "free" economy, which government does not attempt to direct into this or that channel, will prove a long-term match for the guided capitalisms of Japan, West Germany, France, and others.

Thatcherism has been so relatively brutal, moreover, partly because previous governments, Labour and Conservative, did not face the smaller problems as they arose. They did not themselves tackle modernization in a full-blooded and extended way. She has done so. Any future reforms must start from the base that her governments have helped to fashion; and in many respects it is a better economic base to start from than that which was bequeathed to her—though the social problems, from crime to a demoralized state education system, have generally gotten worse.

The restoration of a sense of Britishness that is not apologetic must be counted to Thatcher's credit, too. Like anyone to the left of center, I am reluctant to write such words; but the benefit of travel about the world makes the acknowledgment inevitable. Her stature, especially in such surprising quarters as Moscow, Rome, and Dublin, is very high indeed. She is seen as formidably direct and tough; and she has made (as they will privately attest) the job of British diplomats (not natural Thatcherites, in the main) rather more pleasant than it was in the '70s, at the end of which decade Sir Nicholas Henderson, ambassador to Paris, wrote to the foreign secretary that "in France we have come nowadays to be identified with malaise as closely as in the old days we were associated with success." Some of that increase in stature has been done with mirrors; the morale-boosting thrashing of a piece of fascist adventurism in the Falklands; and the sharply better state of many of Britain's economic indicators still leaves the country in the second league of advanced economies. But the fact remains that Thatcher's achievement has been real enough by any political standards.

SHE WOULD not claim this, but I believe that Thatcher has done a service to the feminist cause. Few feminists would claim this, either. Indeed, many in Britain have accused Thatcher of explicitly discriminating against, and impoverishing, women. I think that is false. It is more plausible to maintain that she has been indifferent to a modern sexual agenda, that she has been quite content to praise women's roles as wives and mothers (though not to any excess: she has not given over much time to either role herself), that she has been not at all sympathetic to pleas for mechanisms to secure equal pay and equal opportunities—though she has reluctantly acquiesced in legal mechanisms designed to obtain these objectives, mostly enforced on the U.K. by European Community legislation. As always, she thinks these matters are best left to the market.

But (Jenkins makes some of this point) if there is such a thing as a feminine approach to politics that lies deeper than the endorsement of a supposedly feminist agenda, then Thatcher surely epitomizes it. It is instinctual, in that it draws on a wider and different emotional range than most male politicians allow themselves to display. It is also capable of a more patient, stronger, more stubborn commitment to a given course of action than most male politicians have displayed. Her capture and holding of supreme office through hard batterings, in short, scuppered the notions of feminine incapacity for the largest of challenges, notions that many men still harbored. Scornful of feminism, Thatcher has vindicated its central message.

She is not a woman to be haunted by anything for long; I doubt that she will be haunted in her retirement (if she is to have one) by her failures. Her modernization project has left what Kinnock has called an archipelago of poverty, in all the sharper relief for its coexistence with much more widespread, much more conspicuous, wealth. The programs for addressing that poverty have been small—though there is some sign, in Thatcher's third term, that they will assume a larger role, and that the implicit assumption that it was the poor's "own fault" will no longer be so salient. Millions of men and women have passed much of the Thatcher decade without work, and without hope for their lives. It may have been beyond the powers of any prime minister to shield them from that desolation forever. But others would have thrown them more lifelines, and allowed the already rich to enrich themselves less.

Thatcher's beloved market has only done—it can only do—so much. Britain still exists in a world where state-assisted capitalism is the order of the day, where what Gamble (quoting Perry Anderson) calls a "regulative intelligence" keeps advanced capitalist societies both securely advanced and securely capitalist. In France, that "intelligence" is a state-led technocracy. In West Germany, it is the banking system and the social partners (industry, unions, and the state). In Japan, it is the bureaucracy interlinked with the banks, relying on enterprise-minded unions for ever increasing productivity and flexibility. Britain's stab at some equivalent sort of corporatism failed, which remains, to my mind, much the largest reason for Thatcher's initial victory. Since then, she has simply sponged the blackboard clean of most traces of the alien creed. In doing so, however, she has left the economy dangerously exposed to a faltering in the company-led, oil- and U.S.-deficit-dependent recovery. She has not tackled the problem of the British economy root and branch. She has finessed it.

Like some others who have resisted it for years, I no longer refuse to pay her some tribute. It is a matter of intellectual honesty. Not to grant Thatcher some real admiration would be to be as mired in dogmatism as the reactionaries who grumbled through Attlee's time. But, thankfully for democracy, Thatcher has left a large job for a revived opposition in her wake—even if it will stay in that wake for some time after she has disappeared over the horizon.

JOHN LLOYD

John Lloyd is a former editor of the *New Statesman* in London. He is a senior writer at the *Financial Times*.

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SCIENCE FRICTION

Hospital of the Transfiguration
by Stanislaw Lem
translated from the Polish by William Brand

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 207 pp., $17.95)

Q: What puts Stanislaw Lem in a category with François Rabelais and Anton Chekhov? A: All three started out in the medical profession. The best known representative of European science fiction, as well as the most widely translated among Poland's living authors, Lem wandered into literature almost reluctantly. Something of a Polish Isaac Asimov, he can claim an up-to-date familiarity with many fields of science; as the legend goes, he devours professional journals from astrophysics to zoopsychiatry at the rate of a dozen a day. Some of his non-fictional works, such as the wittily yet forbiddingly titled *Summa Technologiae*, or the highly technical treatise on literature's cognitive aspects, *Philosophy of Chance*, leave the poor literary critic in helpless awe. But Lem's mind works in mysterious ways. Loaded, computer-like, with an intimidating amount of scientific information, it emits a torrent of novels and short stories that betray this computer's unmistakably human qualities, from compassion to an acerbic sense of humor.

For this sort of mind, medicine might have seemed a better outlet than literature. Born in 1921, Lem received as sound a medical education as was possible in the war-ravaged cities of Lvov in the early '40s and Krakow between 1946 and 1948. After graduation he tried for a while to pursue all of his incompatible interests at once, by writing everything from poems and short stories to popular essays on science to articles published in professional medical journals. Perhaps the only way to avoid a dissociation of personality was for him to make all these fields and genres converge, in science fiction.

In Poland just after the war that was an adventurous thing to do. For one thing, all eyes were turned toward the immediate past. The memories of wartime inhumanity still smarted. It seemed that for many years to come literature would be confined to bearing witness to what had happened, to describing, as one contemporary Polish writer put it, "the fate that humans had procured for humans." At the same time, all individual musings on the future (and what else is science fiction if not a private-enterprise vision of the future?) were being more and more strictly weeded out, to be replaced with "scientifically" elaborated prospects, courtesy of Marxism and its aesthetic extension, Socialist Realism. The Polish term for science fiction is, in fact, "scientific fantasy," a *contradictio in adiecto*. In Stalinist Poland, visions of the future were expected to be "scientific" all right, but unhealthy fantasizing was strictly forbidden.

Young Lem was clever enough, however, to outsmart the guardians of Socialist Realism's purity. He created his own version of science fiction and managed to get it past the censor. After the serialized publication of his first, now forgotten novel, *The Man from Mars*, in a teen magazine in 1946, the appearance in 1951 of his first published book, *The Astronauts*, brought him a huge success. Needless to say, this novel would not have seen the light of day at all had it not been fashioned more or less along the obligatory ideological lines of its time. The global Communist future depicted here is definitely rosy. Space exploration flourishes in the spirit of true internationalism, that is to say, with Russians at the helm. Even in this book, however, Lem's perspicacity somehow has the last word. He manages to pose a number of rather non-Socialist Realist questions concerning the nature of human civilization or the ethical complications involved in mind's triumphs over matter.

In the post-Stalinist years, naturally, Lem's skill in asking such questions has found incomparably more room to develop. Over the past 30 years he has been developing as a writer with break-neck speed, not only writing profusely but constantly surprising his readers. What strikes Lem's faithful followers most, I think, is his uncanny thematic and generic versatility, combined with a poetic gift for totally unexpected literary approaches. Nobody could have pre-

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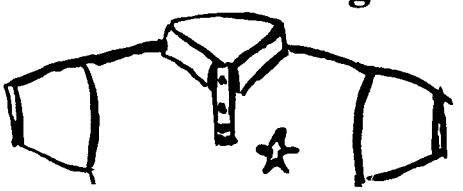

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Since *The New Republic* has been thrashing George Bush for Questioning Dukakis's Patriotism, we were interested to note a sentence in a recent issue: "Even patriots are only mumbling along [with the Pledge]." *Even* patriots? Are patriots some sort of fringe group? Aren't we *all* patriots? Apparently not. At least not when we (we liberals) are talking among ourselves.

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icted, for instance, that after the success of his first couple of middle-of-the-road science fiction novels he would switch to pure-nonsensical satires with strong anti-totalitarian overtones, as in *The Star Diaries* (1957). Or that alongside his ingenious yet relatively regular space-exploration novels such as the famous *Solaris*, he would later publish farcical fables like *The Cyberiad*, Kafkaesque parables like *Memoirs Found in a Bathtub*, or philosophical thrillers like *The Investigation*, not to mention even crazier generic oddities such as *A Perfect Vacuum*, which is a collection of reviews of nonexistent books.

And this is not all. It is merely the Lem available in English. Lem's die-hard Polish fans also know him as more than a science fiction writer. To them he is also a philosopher, a literary theoretician and critic (writing sagaciously on the subject of science fiction itself), a brilliant memoirist, and even a poet (although this early component of his output, unearthed and published in Poland in 1975, was not much more than a surprise gift for Lem's admirers).

Wait a second, there's more. There is also Lem the realistic novelist. And quite a traditional realistic novelist he is, too. *Hospital of the Transfiguration* shows us a Lem hardly imaginable to anyone who has read his *Memoirs of a Space Traveler* or *The Futurological Congress*. What we actually see here is the resolute direction of his early writing, before it was irreversibly diverted from that straight route by his success with science fiction. *The Astronauts* was Lem's first published book, but *Hospital* was the first mature novel he completed. It had been written long before *The Astronauts*, in 1948-49, though it was published only in 1955.

THE PUBLISHER'S blurb for the new book never mentions that *Hospital of the Transfiguration* is part of a larger whole. It is the first volume in a trilogy titled in Polish, with an anti-Proustian wink, *The Time Not Lost*. Not that it would have made any sense to have the entire trilogy translated and published here. Its second and third volumes are marred by many flaws; in recent decades Lem himself has condemned these two volumes to oblivion and allowed the Polish publishers to re-edit only the first. Indeed, the closer to the final chapters of the last volume, the more forgettable this trilogy seems to today's reader.

The edifying intent is clear in the title. The novel was supposed to be a sort of modern bildungsroman, in which a young man's experiences make him gradually a fuller person, and thus make his "time" of trial worthwhile and "not lost." The trouble, however, was that young Lem had ambitiously decided to set the plot of his trilogy against the background of his own turbulent times. These included not only the war years, but the immediate post-war phase of People's Poland as well. In cognitive and aesthetic terms, this was a suicidal decision. Whoever in 1948-49, or especially in the several years that followed, wished to write a contemporary novel based in Poland faced a brutal alternative: either to write for his desk drawer or to lie. Lem attempted to find a middle road by trying to save as much of the picture's complexity as possible, but only at the cost of ultimately portraying Socialist Poland as the blessed haven for his troubled hero and his nation.

There were, to be sure, hundreds of far less honest books produced in Poland at the time, and Lem does not really have much reason to blush. Still, it was wise on his part to cut *The Time Not Lost* down to the *Hospital of the Transfiguration*. Read separately, this brief novel, though certainly not flawless, offers Lem's admirers a highly interesting look into his early realistic aspirations and concerns. Rather than emulating H. G. Wells, he is quite visibly inspired by an entirely different novelistic tradition here, one that extends from Dostoyevsky to Thomas Mann (the setting and the ideas of *The Magic Mountain* must have been a crucial influence); and if the final results are not quite up to these two names, it is certainly not for Lem's lack of ambition.

Lem's own Hans Castorp is a young doctor fresh out of school, named Stefan Trzyniecki, and his Davos is a hospital for the mentally ill in the Polish provinces during the first months of the Nazi occupation. At the novel's outset, Trzyniecki, having just taken part in a relative's funeral in the country (his kin are mostly landowning families, but he himself is a poor city-dweller), succumbs to a spiritual crisis, caused by many things at once: his realization of the senselessness of suffering and death, his depression after his country's defeat, the instinctive repulsion most people awake in him, and finally the Gombrowiczian sense of his own unbearable incompleteness and indefiniteness. In order to escape from all this he decides not to return home, and instead to accept his friend's invitation to join the staff of a nearby psychiatric asylum.

HERE THE book's best part starts. *Hospital of the Transfiguration* proves the old point about realistic literature: whenever the author touches upon the concrete subjects he knows thoroughly, instead of voicing general truths, his writing always gets better, becomes more convincing, not merely in an informative but also in a strictly aesthetic sense. In reading Lem's novel, it is not its philosophical or moralistic import, but the raw substance of tangible experience, the fruit of his medical training, that appeals most.

By contrast, the devices Lem employs to drive his bildungsroman points home lend the novel an air of predictability. The book's very title deflates the suspense: we know beforehand that the hospital setting and the symbolic "transfiguration" of the protagonist in it will serve as the novel's pivotal elements. The underlying concept of the isolated microcosm of a hospital as a sort of testing lab where human characters mature or break under pressure, where, despite all isolation, the external world constantly makes its ominous presence felt, where finally the protagonists, all

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their self-centered escapism notwithstanding, are forced to make a moral choice, quickly becomes too transparent and obvious.

Yet Lem's portrayal of the hospital itself still retains a great deal of literary power, from the stark realism of the ward or the operating room to the hidden mechanisms behind the asylum's functioning—the web of cruelty, intrigue, and indifference that binds the doctors and patients alike, the deranged or unscrupulous behavior of some and the desperate efforts of others to preserve the last vestiges of sanity and humaneness. The pages that depict this world show Lem in his element. The book's final chapter, in which the Nazis take over the hospital and force the doctors to consent to the patients' liquidation, is supposed to provide both tragic *peripeteia* and moralistic dilemma, but it seems almost conventional by comparison. This novel's plot—which begins with a funeral and ends with an act of physical love—locates the tragic conflict in the human body rather than in the realm of history or ethics; its bitterness is less that of a moralist than that of a physician who knows pain, madness, and death from close personal observation.

This book may provide the answer to the question of why Lem the budding realist switched to science fiction. Was the failure of the next parts of his trilogy an indication to him that under the conditions of censorship the futuristic disguise would help him write more honestly about humanity's contemporary problems? Or did he simply find himself, as an artist and thinker, at realism's dead end? The disparity of weight between the theme of human biology and the theme of human history in *Hospital of the Transfiguration* suggests yet another possible answer. Lem is one of those writers who is interested more in the essential immutability of human existence than in any superficial evolution that history may provide. Paradoxically, he visualizes the future only to find more proof of his suspicion that human fate has remained, will remain, bound by the same laws of pain, love, and death, no matter what space suits we wear or what utopias we build.

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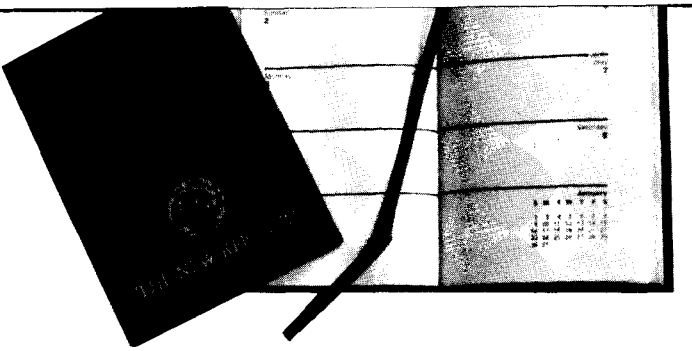

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

The Sealed Bottle

THERE IS NO EASE in Zion, and it makes little sense to pretend otherwise. Even the *intifada* aside, Israel may be experiencing its gloomiest passage since statehood. Some of its most venerable economic institutions—including the banks and the country's largest employer, Koor, a conglomerate owned by the trade union federation—are on the verge of bankruptcy. Other economic shock waves are yet to come. This amounts to *kaddish* for socialist planning in yet another society fouled by indulgent and corrupt public bureaucracies. The national health insurance program (Kupat Holim) is going the way of Britain's, perhaps worse. The universities, especially the mother university, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, hope for an inflation that would deflate their whopping debts. This puts them at odds with the entire nation; the reduction of inflation from 500 to 15 percent over the last four years is, along with the army's lean strength, almost the only solid evidence left that Israelis are willing to weather adversity. But it is not enough to stem the downward spiral in morale and élan. That is to say: there is no putting the *intifada* aside. Any family with a man aged 18 to 50 is liable to see him sent to the territories to face stones, Molotov cocktails, and grenades—and to protect himself and his comrades in ways that not only mightily displease Peter Jennings but also burden the Zionist conscience.

I WRITE FROM THE charged atmosphere of Jerusalem, where some 120 friends of the city associated with the Jerusalem Foundation—Americans, Europeans, and Latins; Christians and Jews—have gathered as an act of solidarity and to conduct a fact-finding mission. Their inquiry has been relentless and occasionally disenchanting, but such was the intention of those who convened the mission—particularly the city's mayor, Teddy Kollek. He is the one responsible for Jerusalem's flourishing over the last two decades, and to him must go credit for the fact that the uprising and its quelling have been milder here than elsewhere. Of the nearly 300 Palestinians killed in the uprising since late 1987, only one died in the streets of Jerusalem. And there has been not a single incident in which Jewish toughs preyed on one of the thousands of Arabs whose lives and livelihoods bring them into Jewish neighborhoods. The same, unfortunately, cannot be said for some of the national police (Jerusalem is not army turf), notably the border police, which are disproportionately composed of Druze men quite willing to avenge their legitimate grievances against the Arabs illegitimately.

ONE REASON Jerusalem is different is that, unlike the territories that remain up for grabs politically, Jerusalem, everyone knows, won't be carved up again. This doesn't mean Arabs can't hope for modifications of its and their status. But the city's Palestinians have been coolly chastened by the knowledge that the Jews will not willfully abandon what they have built here so solidly since 1967, what they yearned for during nearly two millennia. This is no guarantee that hotter heads will be kept at bay. If they are, it will be because Teddy Kollek has tried to respect the Palestinian sensibility. Teddy (he is always Teddy, never Kollek, even to the Arabs) has made great strides toward equalizing city services, bridging gaps that in 1967 separated backwardness from modernity. Jerusalem's big remaining problem is that a majority of its population has not been sufficiently habituated either to democracy or to tolerance—neither the Arabs nor the Haredi (ultra-orthodox or, literally, God-fearing) Jews nor even many of the Jews who came from Arab countries. Compromise is not their custom. So one of Teddy's main tasks is to instill in the more tolerant a tolerance for the intolerant, and hope that it will somehow rub off on the rest.

WE MET WITH Jonathan Kuttab, cofounder of the legal arm of the Palestinian movement. Kuttab is brilliant in exposition, winning in style. Perhaps too winning. After scoring some strong points early on, he descended into lies. He said, for example, that medical authorities weren't immunizing Palestinian babies against polio even in the wake of a polio scare. But we had just come from the Sheikh Jarrah medical center (built by the foundation, incidentally) and seen dozens of Arab babies having their tongues daubed with polio vaccine. After two or three such stretches, Kuttab lost his audience. The Palestinians have always lost by overreaching.

EPHRAIM SNEH, a physician and recently retired general who had been the civil administrator of the West Bank (and whose father was secretary general of the Israeli Communist Party), summed up the lessons of the *intifada*: Israel has learned the weakness of its strength; the Palestinians have learned the strength of their weakness. Sneh, like other military men I know here, explains to the public that there are no military solutions to the underlying problem. (He is Shimon Peres's campaign manager.) Be that as it may, the Palestinians have won one victory on the ground: the "green line" demarcating the 1949 armistice lines, the pre-Six-Day War lines, has been re-established as a psychological frontier. Jews cross it only at peril, so only settlers cross at all. The paradox is that Arabs cross it into pre-1967 Israel all the time. They have no alternative. Even the PLO-mandated strikes that leave East Jerusalem stores open only three hours in the morning oblige Palestinians to shop in the Mahne Yehuda market in Jewish West Jerusalem.

THE NIGHT OF long knives has already come to Gaza and the West Bank: Palestinians strung up on electric wires by other Palestinians, or simply hacked to death. History repeats. Here a fragment from *Arabesques*, the wonderfully intricate and subtle novel by the Israeli Arab writer Anton Shammas: "That year the spirit of the Arab Rebellion began to seethe in the villages, after the passage of the first great enthusiasm that drove the villagers to offer food and help to those who had raised the banner of revolt. . . . [O]ut of the sealed bottle burst the *djinni* who was to drown the rebellion in a turbid outpouring of corruption and weakness. . . . Then the murders began. A red seal stamped on the flap of his *gunbaz*, the long-sleeved garment worn by men, told the owner that his days were numbered. . . . The *mukhtar* of Ikrit, the *mukhtar* of Suhmata and the *mukhtar* of the western quarter of Deir El-Kasi paid no mind to this red seal, and they paid with their lives. Then came the turn of the common people."

MARTIN PERETZ

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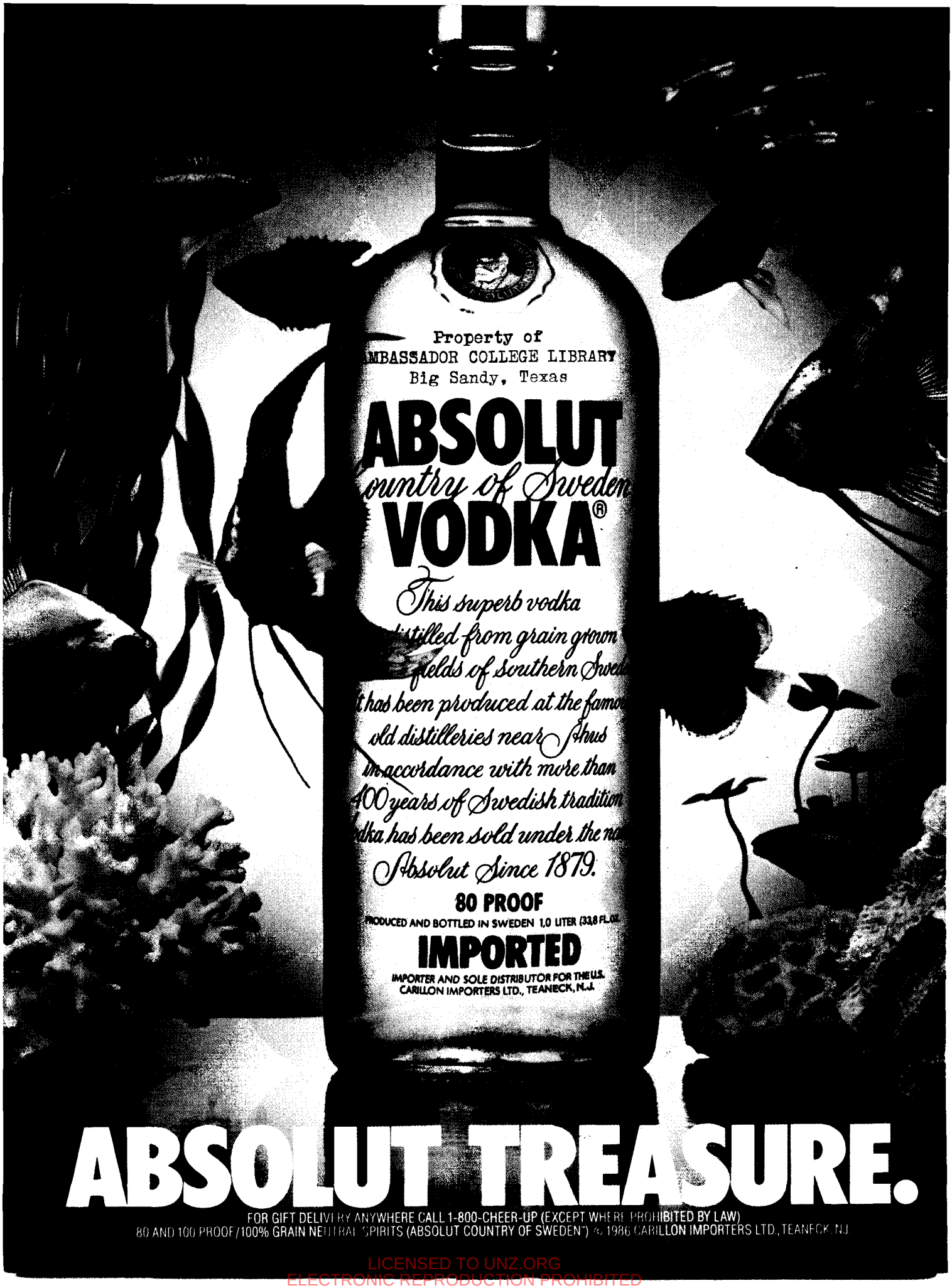
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